Home Office

Country Policy and Information Note
Pakistan: Ahmadis

Version 5.0

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Preface

Purpose

This note provides country of origin information (COI) and analysis of COI for use by Home Office decision makers handling particular types of protection and human rights claims (as set out in the Introduction section). It is not intended to be an exhaustive survey of a particular subject or theme.

It is split into 2 parts: (1) an assessment of COI and other evidence; and (2) COI. These are explained in more detail below.

Assessment

This section analyses the evidence relevant to this note - that is information in the COI section; refugee/human rights laws and policies; and applicable caselaw - by describing this and its inter-relationships, and provides an assessment of, in general, whether one or more of the following applies**:**

- a person is reasonably likely to face a real risk of persecution or serious harm
- that the general humanitarian situation is so severe that there are substantial grounds for believing that there is a real risk of serious harm because conditions amount to inhuman or degrading treatment as within paragraphs 339C and 339CA(iii) of the Immigration Rules / Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)
- that the security situation is such that there are substantial grounds for believing there is a real risk of serious harm because there exists a serious and individual threat to a civilian's life or person by reason of indiscriminate violence in a situation of international or internal armed conflict as within paragraphs 339C and 339CA(iv) of the Immigration Rules
- a person is able to obtain protection from the state (or quasi state bodies)
- a person is reasonably able to relocate within a country or territory
- a claim is likely to justify granting asylum, humanitarian protection or other form of leave, and
- if a claim is refused, it is likely or unlikely to be certifiable as 'clearly unfounded' under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.

Decision makers **must**, however, still consider all claims on an individual basis, taking into account each case's specific facts.

Country of origin information

The country information in this note has been carefully selected in accordance with the general principles of COI research as set out in the Common EU [European Union] Guidelines for Processing Country of Origin Information (COI), April 2008, and the Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation's (ACCORD), Researching Country Origin Information – Training Manual, 2013. Namely, taking into account the COI's relevance, reliability, accuracy, balance, currency, transparency and traceability.

The structure and content of the country information section follows a terms of reference which sets out the general and specific topics relevant to this note.

All information included in the note was published or made publicly available on or before the 'cut-off' date(s) in the country information section. Any event taking place or report/article published after these date(s) is not included.

All information is publicly accessible or can be made publicly available. Sources and the information they provide are carefully considered before inclusion. Factors relevant to the assessment of the reliability of sources and information include:

- the motivation, purpose, knowledge and experience of the source
- how the information was obtained, including specific methodologies used
- the currency and detail of information
- whether the COI is consistent with and/or corroborated by other sources.

Multiple sourcing is used to ensure that the information is accurate and balanced, which is compared and contrasted where appropriate so that a comprehensive and up-to-date picture is provided of the issues relevant to this note at the time of publication.

The inclusion of a source is not, however, an endorsement of it or any view(s) expressed.

Each piece of information is referenced in a footnote. Full details of all sources cited and consulted in compiling the note are listed alphabetically in the bibliography.

Feedback

Our goal is to provide accurate, reliable and up-to-date COI and clear guidance. We welcome feedback on how to improve our products. If you would like to comment on this note, please email the Country Policy and Information Team.

Independent Advisory Group on Country Information

The Independent Advisory Group on Country Information (IAGCI) was set up in March 2009 by the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration to support him in reviewing the efficiency, effectiveness and consistency of approach of COI produced by the Home Office.

The IAGCI welcomes feedback on the Home Office's COI material. It is not the function of the IAGCI to endorse any Home Office material, procedures or policy. The IAGCI may be contacted at:

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Information about the IAGCI's work and a list of the documents which have been reviewed by the IAGCI can be found on the Independent Chief Inspector's pages of the gov.uk website.

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Assessment

Updated: 24 August 2021

1. Introduction

1.1 Basis of claim

1.1.1 Fear of persecution and/or serious harm by state and/or non-state actors because the person is an Ahmadi Muslim.

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2. Consideration of issues

2.1 Credibility

2.1.1 For information on assessing credibility, see the Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status.

2.1.2 Decision makers must also check if there has been a previous application for a UK visa or another form of leave. Asylum applications matched to visas should be investigated prior to the asylum interview (see the Asylum Instruction on Visa Matches, Asylum Claims from UK Visa Applicants).

2.1.3 Decision makers should also consider the need to conduct language analysis testing (see the Asylum Instruction on Language Analysis).

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2.2 Exclusion

2.2.1 Decision makers must consider whether there are serious reasons for considering whether one (or more) of the exclusion clauses is applicable. Each case must be considered on its individual facts and merits.

2.2.2 If the person is excluded from the Refugee Convention, they will also be excluded from a grant of humanitarian protection (which has a wider range of exclusions than refugee status).

2.2.3 For further guidance on the exclusion clauses and restricted leave, see the Asylum Instruction on Exclusion under Articles 1F and 33(2) of the Refugee Convention, Humanitarian Protection and the instruction on Restricted Leave.

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2.3 Convention reason(s)

2.3.1 Actual or imputed religion.

2.3.2 Establishing a convention reason is not sufficient to be recognised as a refugee. The question is whether the person has a well-founded fear of persecution on account of an actual or imputed Refugee Convention reason.

2.3.3 For further guidance on the 5 Refugee Convention grounds see the Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status.

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2.4 Risk

a. State treatment

2.4.1 There are no reliable estimates of the number of Ahmadi Muslims in Pakistan as many Ahmadis boycott the census as they are not able to self-identify as Muslim. Available information indicates the population is between 187,000 (official 2017 census results) and 600,000 (community sources), though some estimates put the number as high as 4 million. Between 60,000 and 70,000 (90-95%) of the population of Rabwah (considered the community's headquarters), is Ahmadi, whilst the smaller Lahore branch is between 5,000 and 10,000. Ahmadis live across the country and aside from Rabwah, other main population centres include Sialkot, Quetta, Multan, Rawalpindi, Karachi, Lahore and Faisalabad (see Demography).

2.4.2 Whilst Ahmadis living in Rabwah are said to have more freedoms and feel safer than in other areas, there remains an underlying threat due to the legislation that restricts their ability to openly practise their faith. They are not permitted to hold religious conferences or hold peaceful gatherings larger than 30 persons. Anti-Ahmadi sentiment also exists in Rabwah (see Legal rights and Life in Rabwah).

2.4.3 In assessing the evidence before them, the Upper Tribunal in MN and others held that 'Ahmadis are an oppressed religious minority in Pakistan. The relevant provisions of the Pakistan Penal Code … restrict the ways in which Ahmadis are able to express and practise their beliefs. If defied, the provisions expose Ahmadis to the risk of prosecution coupled with a risk of detention pending trial' (paragraph 101).

2.4.4 In MN and others the Upper Tribunal also found, from the evidence before them, that:

> 'The ability of Ahmadis to defend any prosecution that may ensue after faith-based FIRs have been issued under the PPC, is hampered by the risk of unfair treatment by the police and the trial courts. These problems relate not only to the substance of any prosecution but also the ability of Ahmadis to readily obtain bail prior to or after proceedings have been brought… On the other hand Ahmadis can be reasonably confident that on appeal to higher courts unfair or unreasonable decisions are likely to be overturned' (paragraph 102).

2.4.5 In setting out country guidance in MN and others, the Upper Tribunal held:

> 'The background to the risk faced by Ahmadis is legislation that restricts the way in which they are able openly to practise their faith. The legislation not only prohibits preaching and other forms of proselytising but also in practice restricts other elements of manifesting one's religious beliefs, such as holding open discourse about religion with non-Ahmadis, although not amounting to proselytising. The prohibitions include openly referring to one's place of worship as a mosque and to one's religious leader as an Imam. In addition, Ahmadis are not permitted to refer to the call to prayer as azan nor to call themselves Muslims or refer to their faith as Islam. Sanctions include a fine and imprisonment and if blasphemy is found, there is a risk of the death penalty which to date has not been carried out although there is a risk of lengthy incarceration if the penalty is imposed' (paragraph 119i).

2.4.6 The Upper Tribunal further held 'It is, and has long been, possible in general for Ahmadis to practise their faith on a restricted basis either in private or in community with other Ahmadis, without infringing domestic Pakistan law' (paragraph 119ii).

2.4.7 In MN and others the Upper Tribunal also held that:

> 'If an Ahmadi is able to demonstrate that it is of particular importance to his religious identity to practise and manifest his faith openly in Pakistan in defiance of the restrictions in the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC) under sections 298B and 298C, by engaging in behaviour described in [paragraph 2.4.4 above], he or she is likely to be in need of protection, in the light of the

serious nature of the sanctions that potentially apply as well as the risk of prosecution under section 295C for blasphemy' (paragraph 120i).

'It is no answer to expect an Ahmadi who fits the description just given to avoid engaging in behaviour described in [paragraph 2.4.4 above] to avoid a risk of prosecution' (paragraph 120ii).

2.4.8 However, the EWCA in the case of WA (Pakistan), re-made the UT's findings in paragraphs 120 and 123. It held that:

'If the decision-maker's conclusion is that the Claimant, if returned to Pakistan, will avoid behaviour which would attract persecution, then the decision-maker must ask the question why that would be so… if a material reason (and not necessarily the only reason) for such behaviour will be to avoid persecution, then it is likely that the Claimant will have a valid claim for asylum. There is no requirement that public expression of Ahmadi religious faith, of a kind which is likely to attract persecution, should be of "particular importance" to the Claimant. Such a requirement is inconsistent with the test as laid down in HJ (Iran)'

'To that extent, the guidance given in the body of MN (Ahmadis) Pakistan CG [paragraphs 120(i) and 123] and in the headnote [3(i) and 6] is misleading and should not be followed' (paragraphs 60(iii) and 61).

2.4.9 The situation for Ahmadis in Pakistan has not changed significantly since MN and others was heard and, in general, there are not very strong grounds supported by cogent evidence to justify a departure from MN and others (see Legal rights, Life in Rabwah, Religious practices, Proselytising and Tabligh, Application of the blasphemy laws and Police and judicial protection).

2.4.10 Ahmadis continue to face a high level of official discrimination and remain the subject of legislation that denies them basic rights, including, but not limited to, the right to be recognised as Muslims, calling their place of worship a mosque, performing the Muslim call to prayer, using traditional Islamic greetings in public or calling their children Mohammed. Ahmadis may be penalised for preaching or 'insulting the religious feelings' of other Muslims, leaving them open to official punishment for 'blasphemy', which may include a prison sentence, or in the case of insulting the Prophet Mohammed, a sentence of death or life imprisonment. In 2019 there were 16 Ahmadis in prison for blasphemy. In 2020, at least 199 people were charged with blasphemy, around 20% of whom were Ahmadi (see Legal rights and Application of the blasphemy laws).

2.4.11 Ahmadis face discrimination regarding eligibility to hold government positions and to contest elections, as well as in the right to vote. Ahmadis cannot hold governmental positions or vote without publicly denouncing their founder, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. Voters registering as Ahmadi are kept on a separate voters list for non-Muslims, which is published during election periods and may pose a security risk as it provides extremists with information on the residential addresses of all Ahmadis in that locality. Anti-Ahmadi rhetoric by public officials continues to be reported and the sale of Ahmadi literature is banned. Anti-terror legislation associated with the National Action Plan 2014 has been used to seize and ban Ahmadi publications on the grounds that they

are ‘hate material’. There are reports of police entering Ahmadi places of worship to remove signs of the Islamic faith, demolishing or sealing mosques, or giving them to non-Ahmadi imams and their communities. Reports also document the harassment, arbitrary arrest, detention and fabricated charges against Ahmadis for blasphemy and other offences (see State treatment and attitudes and Electoral register and voting rights).

2.4.12 The Ahmadiyya community is centred around strong oral and written traditions, with a distinctive emphasis on performance of religious practices. As the law prohibits Ahmadis from propagating, openly expressing or manifesting the Islamic nature of their faith, Ahmadis who discuss or promote Ahmadiyyat with non-Ahmadis face the risk of being reported to the authorities. The distinguishing attire worn by Ahmadi women may be seen as a form of proselytising, which may result in discrimination and legal repercussions (see Legal rights, Religious practices and Ahmadi women).

2.4.13 A person who converts to another faith or who is seen to renounce Islam in any other way can be targeted for blasphemy, which carries the death sentence. Although religious conversion is not in itself illegal, as of December 2018 the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) refused to change a convert's religion from Islam to another faith on national identity cards unless a court order existed (see Ahmadi converts).

2.4.14 Ahmadis who openly practise their faith (beyond the restricted basis permitted by domestic law) are liable to prosecution under the anti-Ahmadi and blasphemy laws and are likely to be in need of protection. Anti-terror legislation has also been used to target Ahmadis. Decision makers must consider whether there are particular factors specific to the person which would place them at risk. Each case must be considered on its facts with the onus on the person to show that they would be at risk of serious harm or persecution on account of their actual or perceived religion.

2.4.15 When considering a claim from an Ahmadi who says that they will chose to live quietly on return to Pakistan, decision makers must ask why that person would choose to do that. If it is because they fear that any outward expression of their faith would cause them to come to the adverse attention of the authorities and to persecutory treatment, then it is likely they would qualify for asylum.

2.4.16 For further guidance on assessing risk, see the Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status and, in regard to women, Gender issues in the asylum claim.

2.4.17 For the general position of women in Pakistan, see also the Country Policy and Information Note on Pakistan: Women fearing gender-based violence.

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b. Societal treatment

2.4.18 In MN and others the Upper Tribunal held that 'There is clear evidence that this legislation [that restricts the way in which Ahmadis are able openly to practise their faith] is used by non-state actors to threaten and harass Ahmadis. This includes the filing of First Information Reports (FIRs) (the first step in any criminal proceedings) which can result in detentions whilst prosecutions are being pursued. Ahmadis are also subject to attacks by non-state actors from sectors of the majority Sunni Muslim population' (paragraph 119i).

2.4.19 In MN and others the Upper Tribunal found, from the evidence it was provided, that:

> '[Ahmadis] face hostility from sectors of the majority of society which is made up of Sunni Muslims. Disagreement with and disapproval of the beliefs of Ahmadis has intensified with the increased Islamisation of Pakistan as well as the growth of fundamentalism. In addition to vulnerability to terrorist threats from the Taliban, they face vehement opposition from the Khatme-e-Nabuwat whose tactics not only include taking out FIRs against Ahmadis but also intimidation. Their influence is pervasive in Pakistani institutions' (paragraph 101).

2.4.20 For more information on First Information Reports (FIRs), see the Country Policy and Information Note on Pakistan: Documentation.

2.4.21 In MN and others the Upper Tribunal held, 'Whilst an Ahmadi who has been found to be not reasonably likely to engage or wish to engage in paragraph [2.4.4] behaviour is, in general, not at real risk on return to Pakistan, judicial fact-finders may in certain cases need to consider whether that person would nevertheless be reasonably likely to be targeted by non-state actors on return for religious persecution by reason of his/her prominent social and/or business profile' (paragraph 127).

2.4.22 The situation for Ahmadis in Pakistan has not changed significantly since MN and others was heard and, in general, there are not very strong grounds supported by cogent evidence to justify a departure from MN and others (see Legal rights, Life in Rabwah, Application of the blasphemy laws, Religious practices, Proselytising and Tabligh and Societal treatment and attitudes).

2.4.23 Anti-Ahmadi rallies and rhetoric by anti-Ahmadi groups, such as Khatme-Nabuwat (Finality of Prophethood), occur nationwide. Anti-Ahmadi protests in Rabwah are known to occur, causing a lockdown of homes and businesses as protesters threaten the town's Ahmadi residents. Hate speech, including on social media platforms and which may be seen as inciting violence, is used against the Ahmadi community. Hate speech is often published without restriction by the media. During the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, there were reports that Ahmadis were denied charitable aid on account of their faith. Anti-Ahmadi banners, posters and stickers are displayed in public places such as bus terminals, railway stations, markets, grocery stores, cloth shops, bookstores and restaurants. Some shops display signs telling Ahmadis to keep out, as well as warnings against buying Ahmadi-made products (see Life in Rabwah, Hate speech and incitement of violence and Discrimination and harassment).

2.4.24 Between 1984 and July 2020, 269 Ahmadis were reportedly killed due to their faith. This includes 86 Ahmadis who were killed when 2 Ahmadi mosques in Lahore were attacked by the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) on 28 May 2010. According to reports, 3 incidents of apparent targeted killings of Ahmadis by unknown individuals took place during 2019 and 5 Ahmadis were killed in targeted attacks between July and November 2020. As well as targeted attacks, Ahmadi property and places of worship have been destroyed or desecrated (see Attacks against Ahmadis).

2.4.25 Ahmadis are routinely harassed and discriminated against in schools and educational institutions, and in their places of employment. They are sometimes prevented from renting properties from non-Ahmadis (see Discrimination and harassment and Discrimination in education and employment).

2.4.26 Women in Pakistan face extensive and pervasive gender based discrimination throughout their lives due to a deeply entrenched system of patriarchy in all tiers of public and private life. Due to their distinctive dress, which may be deemed as a form of proselytising, Ahmadi women may be at greater risk of discrimination and harassment than men (see Ahmadi women and Proselytising and Tabligh).

2.4.27 However, the Upper Tribunal held in MN and others that there is no basis for considering that Ahmadi women as a whole are at a particular or additional risk; the decision that they should not attend mosques in Pakistan was made by the Ahmadi Community following attacks on the mosques in Lahore in 2010. There is no evidence that women in particular were the target of those attacks (paragraph 121).

2.4.28 For the general position of women in Pakistan, see also the Country Policy and Information Note on Pakistan: Women fearing gender-based violence.

2.4.29 The situation for Ahmadi women in Pakistan has not changed significantly since MN and others was heard and, in general, there are not very strong grounds supported by cogent evidence to justify a departure from MN and others (see Ahmadi women).

2.4.30 A person who converts to another faith or who is seen to renounce Islam in any other way can be targeted for blasphemy, which carries the death penalty. Pakistani society in general is extremely hostile to converts from Islam to another faith, with reports of converts being harassed, expulsed from their families and society, attacked and tortured (see Blasphemy laws and Ahmadi converts).

2.4.31 In general, societal treatment and attitudes towards Ahmadis may reach the threshold of persecution and/or serious harm, depending on its nature and repetition. Decision makers must consider whether there are particular factors specific to the person which would place them at risk. Each case must be considered on its facts with the onus on the person to show that they would be at risk of serious harm or persecution on account of their actual or perceived religion.

2.4.32 For further guidance on assessing risk, see the Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status and, in regard to women, Gender issues in the asylum claim.

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2.5 Protection

2.5.1 Where the person has a well-founded fear of persecution from the state they will not, in general, be able to obtain protection from the authorities.

2.5.2 Where the person has a well-founded fear of persecution from non-state actors, including 'rogue' state actors, decision makers must assess whether the state can provide effective protection.

2.5.3 The state has established a functioning criminal justice system although police capacity is limited due to lack of resources, poor training, and insufficient and outdated equipment, which may lead to flawed investigations. Police capabilities are affected by interference and influence from superiors, political actors, security forces and the judiciary. Police are also susceptible to corruption and petty bribery. The acceptance of bribes to register either genuine or false complaints, or to avoid charges, is prevalent. Police efficacy varies by province as do the challenges faced by each force. The effectiveness of the judiciary is limited due to severe delays, large backlogs, limited resources and corruption particularly at lower levels (for further information, see the Country Policy and Information Note on Pakistan: Actors of protection).

2.5.4 Because Ahmadis are the subject of legislation that denies them basic rights, including the right to be recognised as Muslims and openly practise their faith, protection against blasphemy allegations is limited. The correct procedures are not consistently applied by police when investigating blasphemy cases, lower courts do not always apply the correct evidential standards and judges are often reluctant to decide blasphemy cases due to fear of violent retribution. Police are known to have been complicit in harassment and filing of false charges against Ahmadis, or of standing by in the face of anti-Ahmadi violence. There are reports of police entering Ahmadi places of worship to remove signs of the Islamic faith, demolishing or sealing mosques, or giving them to non-Ahmadi imams and their communities (see Police and judicial protection).

2.5.5 Ahmadis may be reluctant to report incidents to the police for fear of facing arrest and prosecution under the anti-Ahmadi or blasphemy laws. Additionally, Ahmadis consider the incidents as part of daily life and do not regularly report them to their community leaders (see Police and judicial protection).

2.5.6 In general, due to discriminatory legislation against Ahmadis, alongside police reluctance to protect and/or complicity in harassment, the state is likely to be able but unwilling to offer effective protection.

2.5.7 For further guidance on assessing state protection, see the Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status and, in regard to women, Gender issues in the asylum claim.

2.5.8 For the general position of women in Pakistan, see also the Country Policy and Information Note on Pakistan: Women fearing gender-based violence.

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2.6 Internal relocation

2.6.1 Where the person has a well-founded fear of persecution or serious harm from the state, they are unlikely to be able to relocate to escape that risk.

2.6.2 Decision makers must give careful consideration to the relevance and reasonableness of internal relocation taking full account of the individual circumstances of the particular person. While the onus is on the person to establish a well-founded fear of persecution or real risk of serious harm, decision makers must demonstrate that internal relocation is reasonable having regard to the individual circumstances of the person.

2.6.3 In MN and others the Upper Tribunal held that 'The option of internal relocation, previously considered to be available in Rabwah, is not in general reasonably open to a claimant who genuinely wishes to engage in … behaviour [that is likely to result in the person being subject to persecution], in the light of the nationwide effect in Pakistan of the anti-Ahmadi legislation' (paragraph 124).

2.6.4 In MN and others the Upper Tribunal also held that 'Ahmadis who are not able to show that they practised their faith at all in Pakistan or that they did so on anything other than the restricted basis described in [paragraph 2.4.5 above] are in general unlikely to be able to show that their genuine intentions or wishes are to practise and manifest their faith openly on return, as described in [paragraph 2.4.4 above]' (paragraph 125).

2.6.5 When considering a claim from an Ahmadi who says that they will chose to live quietly on return to Pakistan, decision makers must ask why that person would choose to do that. If it is because they fear that any outward expression of their faith would cause them to come to the adverse attention of the authorities and to persecutory treatment, then it is likely they will be in need of protection.

2.6.6 The situation for Ahmadis in Pakistan has not changed significantly since MN and others was heard and, in general, there are not very strong grounds supported by cogent evidence to justify a departure from MN and others (see Legal rights, Life in Rabwah, Application of the blasphemy laws, Religious practices, Proselytising and Tabligh and Societal treatment and attitudes).

2.6.7 Whilst some Ahmadis see Rabwah as a secure place, which allows a greater level of freedom than other areas, daily life and routines are compromised due to the underlying sense of threat. Ahmadis living in Rabwah may also face threats from opponents who target the area because of the large number of Ahmadis in the city. Anti-Ahmadi laws are equally applicable in Rabwah as they are in elsewhere in Pakistan (see Life in Rabwah and Legal rights).

2.6.8 Where the person's fear is of ill-treatment at the hands of non-state actors, they may be able to avoid this by moving elsewhere in Pakistan. Internal relocation will only be possible if the risk is not present there and if it would not be unreasonable to expect them to do so. Where the risk stems from non-

state actors threatening to bring about legal action under anti-Ahmadi legislation, it is unlikely that internal relocation will be possible.

2.6.9 For further guidance on considering internal relocation and factors to be taken into account, see the Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status and, in regard to women, Gender issues in the asylum claim.

2.6.10 For the general position of women in Pakistan, see also the Country Policy and Information Note on Pakistan: Women fearing gender-based violence.

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2.7 Certification

2.7.1 Where a claim is refused, it is unlikely to be certifiable as 'clearly unfounded' under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.

2.7.2 For further guidance on certification, see Certification of Protection and Human Rights claims under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 (clearly unfounded claims).

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Country information

Section 3 updated: 24 August 2021

3. Ahmadi faith

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Section 4 updated: 24 August 2021

4. Legal rights

4.1 Constitution

4.1.1 The Pakistan Constitution was amended in 1974 and declared Ahmadis as

non-Muslim[1]. The Azad Jammu and Kashmir Interim Constitution Act was amended in 2018 and also defined Ahmadis as non-Muslim[2]. Despite laws prohibiting Ahmadis from calling themselves Muslim, Ahmadis self-identify as Muslim[3].

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4.2 'Anti-Ahmadi' laws

4.2.1 In 1984, Ordinance XX (pronounced Ordinance 20) was promulgated 'to amend the law to prohibit the Qadiani group, Lahori group and Ahmadis from indulging in anti-Islamic activities.'[4] The Pakistan Penal Code (PPC) was amended under the ordinance to include Articles 298b and 298c, commonly referred to as the 'anti-Ahmadi laws', under which Ahmadis are prevented by law from:

- calling themselves Muslims, either directly or indirectly
- referring to their faith as Islam
- preaching or propagating their religious beliefs
- inviting others to accept Ahmadiyya teachings by words, either written or spoken, or by visible representations
- insulting the religious feelings of Muslims
- calling their places of worship 'mosques' or 'masjid'
- worshipping in non-Ahmadi mosques or public prayer rooms
- performing the Muslim call to prayer
- using the traditional Islamic greeting in public
- publicly quoting from the Qur'an
- displaying the basic affirmation of the Muslim faith[5].

4.2.2 The punishment for violation of these provisions is imprisonment for up to 3 years and a fine[6].

4.2.3 In a meeting of Pakistan experts organised by the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) and held in Rome in October 2017, Matthew Nelson, Professor in Politics at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), stated that 'The amendments in the Pakistan penal code basically made the Ahmadi peaceful practice of their religion a crime.' He went on to explain:

> '… in 1993 there is a landmark judgment, a Supreme Court judgment in the case Zaheeruddin. Zaheeruddin is a case that upheld the constitutionality of these penal code amendments. And they were upheld because the amendments were said to protect public order. And therefore, criminalizing

[1] Constitution of Pakistan, '(Second Amendment) Act, 1974', 17 September 1974
[2] Azad Jammu and Kashmir Interim Constitution (Twelfth Amendment) Act, 16 February 2018
[3] Al Islam, 'Ahmadiyya Muslim Community', no date
[4] Government of Pakistan, 'Ordinance No. XX of 1984', 26 April 1984
[5] Pakistan Penal Code (Articles 298b and 298c), 6 October 1860
[6] Pakistan Penal Code (Articles 298b and 298c), 6 October 1860

the peaceful practice of the Ahmadis was not a violation of a fundamental right to religious freedom because a fundamental right to religious freedom is protected only subject to public order. So if the law privileges public order, it is not inconsistent with the right to religious freedom. So in order to protect public order, the Ahmadiyya practice "must be restricted".'[7]

4.2.4 In a note to the Country Policy and Information Team (CPIT), originally dated 25 April 2018 and updated in July 2021, the International Human Rights Committee (IHRC), a UK-based independent organisation dedicated to defending, promoting and protecting human rights, focusing specifically on the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community (AMC), stated, in relation to Ordinance XX, that it:

> '… clearly states that Ahmadi Muslims cannot preach or propagate their faith. This is beyond doubt and dispute. This makes the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community unique in Pakistan as being the only religious community in Pakistan to be targeted by the state simply on grounds of faith. This legislation not only prohibits preaching and other forms of proselytizing but also in practice restricts other elements of manifesting religious belief, such as holding open discourse about religion with non-Ahmadis, even where these do not amount to proselytizing. The prohibitions include referring openly to one's place of worship as a mosque and to one's religious leader as an Imam. Ahmadis are not allowed to refer to the call to prayer as "azan", or to call themselves Muslims, or to refer to their faith as Islam. Sanctions include a fine and imprisonment and, if blasphemy is found, there is the possibility of the death penalty. If the death penalty is imposed there is a risk of lengthy incarceration. This legislation is used by non-state actors to threaten and harass Ahmadis.'[8]

4.2.5 The US Department of State noted in its International Religious Freedom Report for 2020 (USSD IRF Report 2020):

> 'According to Ahmadiyya community leaders, authorities continued to target and harass Ahmadi Muslims for blasphemy, violations of "anti-Ahmadi laws," and other crimes. Ahmadiyya leaders stated the ambiguous wording of the legal provision forbidding Ahmadis from directly or indirectly identifying themselves as Muslims enabled officials to bring charges against members of the community for using the standard Islamic greeting or for naming their children Mohammed.'[9]

4.2.6 The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in Pakistan told the IHRC that Ahmadis who use the name Muhammad or Islam could be in direct violation of the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC)[10].

See Proselytising and Tabligh.

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[7] EASO, 'EASO COI Meeting Report: Pakistan 16-17 October 2017' (page 30), February 2018
[8] IHRC, 'Note to CPIT' (paragraph 1.2), July 2021
[9] USSD, 'IRF Report 2020' (section II), 12 May 2021
[10] IHRC, 'Note to CPIT' (paragraph 4), 8 June 2018

4.3 Blasphemy laws

4.3.1 Section 295 of the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC) prescribes the Blasphemy laws. Section 295c notes that: 'Whoever by words, either spoken or written, or by visible representation or by any imputation, innuendo, or insinuation, directly or indirectly, defiles the sacred name of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) shall be punished with death, or imprisonment for life, and shall also be liable to fine.'[11]

4.3.2 Below is a tabulated summary of the blasphemy laws and penalties for breaching them, as prescribed in the Pakistan Penal Code[12]:

Penal Code	Description	Penalty
295	Injuring or defiling place of worship, with intent to insult the religion of any class	Up to 2 years imprisonment, or fine, or both
295a	Deliberate and malicious acts intended to outrage religious feelings of any class by insulting its religion or religious beliefs	Up to 10 years imprisonment, or fine, or both
295b	Defiling, etc., of Holy Quran	Life imprisonment
295c	Use of derogatory remarks, etc., in respect of the Holy Prophet	Death or life imprisonment and a fine
298	Uttering words, etc., with deliberate intent to wound religious feelings.	One year imprisonment, or fine, or both
298a	Use of derogatory remarks, etc., in respect of holy personages.	Up to 3 years imprisonment, or fine, or both
298b	Misuse of epithets, descriptions and titles, etc., reserved for certain holy personages or places	Up to 3 years imprisonment and fine
298c	Person of Qadiani [Ahmadi] group, etc., calling himself a Muslim or preaching or propagating his faith	Up to 3 years imprisonment and fine

4.3.3 Human Rights Watch (HRW) indicated in a June 2018 article that, under section 295c of the PPC, '… the Ahmadi belief in the prophethood of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad is considered blasphemous insofar as it "defiles the name of Prophet Muhammad".'[13]

4.3.4 In April 2017 a fact-finding mission, commissioned by the International Human Rights Committee (IHRC) and the Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC),

[11] Pakistan Penal Code (Article 295 and 295c), 6 October 1860
[12] Pakistan Penal Code, 1860 (with amendments)
[13] HRW, 'Pakistan: Ensure Ahmadi Voting Rights', 28 June 2018

took place over a week in Lahore, Islamabad, Jhelum, Chakwal and Rabwah, where the Mission interviewed state actors, human rights activists, leading journalists, leading members of civic society, lawyers and judges and took evidence from over one hundred individuals who claimed to have been victims of religious persecution[14]. The subsequent report (IHRC/AHRC 2017 fact-finding report), published in June 2017, noted that blasphemy laws were often misused to settle personal scores and that '… religious clerics used the Blasphemy Laws to encourage their supporters to take the law into their own hands and endorse the murder of minorities in the name of religion.'[15] The report also noted 'Ahmadis cannot defend themselves against charges of blasphemy without committing blasphemy and placing themselves in acute legal, physical and social jeopardy.'[16]

4.3.5 The IHRC/AHRC 2017 fact-finding report also stated 'Representatives of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community explained that the Blasphemy laws severely restricted the ability of Ahmadis to practice their faith whether collectively or individually. The laws create a situation whereby even performing out every day religious practices carries the risk of prosecution.'[17]

4.3.6 Referring to the blasphemy laws, Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) stated in its report on religious freedom in Pakistan, dated December 2019, that:

> 'The law itself is poorly defined and has low standards for evidence, as it does not require specific proof of intent to commit blasphemy; as a result spurious accusations are commonplace. It is clear that the blasphemy laws are not a deterrent – they are indiscriminately used as a weapon of revenge against both Muslims and non-Muslims to settle personal scores or to resolve disputes over money, property or business, under the guise of insults to religion.'[18]

4.3.7 An October 2019 Policy Brief by the US Commission for International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) noted 'While the Supreme Court and other Pakistani officials have recognized the growing problem of false blasphemy accusations being used to target religious minorities, political leaders – under pressure from certain religious groups – have made no serious steps to repeal the blasphemy law.'[19]

4.3.8 Amnesty International reported in August 2020 that 'The broad, vague and coercive nature of the blasphemy laws violate the rights to freedom of religion and belief and of opinion and expression. They have been used to target some of the most marginalized people in society, including children, individuals with mental disabilities, members of religious minorities, and poorer people.'[20]

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[14] IHRC/AHRC, 'Ahmadis in Pakistan Face an Existential Threat', (page 16), April 2017
[15] IHRC/AHRC, 'Ahmadis in Pakistan Face an Existential Threat', (page 22), April 2017
[16] IHRC/AHRC, 'Ahmadis in Pakistan Face an Existential Threat', (page 22), April 2017
[17] IHRC/AHRC, 'Ahmadis in Pakistan Face an Existential Threat', (page 22), April 2017
[18] CSW, 'Religious Freedom Under Attack' (page 13), December 2019
[19] USCIRF, 'Policy Brief: Pakistan's Blasphemy Law' (page 3), October 2019
[20] Amnesty International, 'Accusations of blasphemy continue to endanger lives', 25 August 2020

See also Application of the blasphemy laws, and Freedom of expression for information on state monitoring of blasphemous content online.

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4.4 Anti-terror laws

4.4.1 A report of an inquiry into the persecution of Ahmadi Muslims and other religious groups in Pakistan by the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, which was based on a range of sources, including members of the Ahmadi community both in the UK and Pakistan, published in July 2020, noted:

> 'Pakistan's National Action Plan (NAP) came into force on 24 December 2014 following the Taliban attack on an army public school in Peshawar on 16 December 2014. Amongst the twenty agenda items of the NAP, it recommended:
>
> - Special trial courts under the supervision of Army. The duration of these courts would be two years.
> - Strict action against the literature, newspapers and magazines promoting hatred, extremism, sectarianism and intolerance.
>
> 'This legislation was aimed at stopping sectarian hatred and extremism but it has been used by the state to target Ahmadis and other religious communities. This has profound implications, as under anti-terror legislation an Ahmadi can be arrested without notice and without recourse to bail. The penalty is a mandatory five-year sentence of imprisonment.'[21]

For information on how anti-terrors have been used against Ahmadis, see Freedom of expression.

4.4.2 The USSD IRF Report 2019 stated 'The military courts' mandate to try civilians for terrorism, sectarian violence, and other charges expired on March 31 [2019].'[22] As noted in the USSD IRF Report 2020 'The government may use the antiterrorism courts, established as a parallel legal structure under the 1997 Antiterrorism Act, to try cases involving violent crimes, terrorist activities, and acts or speech deemed by the government to foment religious hatred, including blasphemy.'[23]

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4.5 Electoral register and voting rights

4.5.1 Identity cards are required for voting[24] (see Computerised National Identity Cards (CNIC), which describes the requirement for Ahmadis to declare themselves as non-Muslim to receive a CNIC). Although Ahmadis can vote, to do so they must renounce their faith or identify as non-Muslim[25].

[21] APPG, 'Suffocation of the faithful' (page 15), July 2020
[22] USSD, 'IRF Report 2019' (section II), 10 June 2020
[23] USSD, 'IRF Report 2020' (section II), 12 May 2021
[24] USSD, 'IRF Report 2020' (section II), 12 May 2021
[25] APPG, 'Suffocation of the faithful' (page 42), July 2020

4.5.2 Reporting on the 2018 general elections, HRW noted 'To register as voters, Ahmadis must either renounce their faith or agree to be placed in a separate electoral list and accept their status as "non-Muslim." Self-identification as Muslims, however, is the cornerstone of Ahmadiyya religious belief, and thus they end up not voting at all.'[26]

4.5.3 The USSD IRF Report 2020 noted:

> 'According to Ahmadiyya leaders, the government effectively disenfranchised their community by requiring voters to swear an oath affirming the "finality of the Prophethood of Mohammed," something that they stated was against Ahmadi belief, in order to register as Muslims. Since voters who registered as Ahmadis were kept on a separate voter list, they said they were more exposed to threats and physical intimidation, and many Ahmadis continued their longstanding practice of boycotting elections.'[27]

4.5.4 The Coalition for Religious Equality and Inclusive Development (CREID), an international consortium led by the Institute of Development Studies (an independent research institute based at the University of Sussex) and funded by the UK Government, published a report in November 2020 on female religious minorities in Pakistan[28]. The report included a study, undertaken by a leader from the Ahmadi community whose name was anonymised for security reasons, which identified the main issues faced by Ahmadi women living in poverty in Pakistan[29]. The study of 30 Pakistani Ahmadis (20 women and 10 men), living in Thailand and awaiting resettlement, noted:

> '… the Government of Pakistan portrays that the AMC [Ahmadi Muslim Community] "boycotts" elections. However, the reality is different. The electoral law in Pakistan effectively eliminates AM [Ahmadis] on the grounds of their beliefs.
>
> 'There are two electoral lists in Pakistan: the main list is for Muslims and "non-Muslims" and the other is a separate list for Ahmadis. To register as voters, AMs are required to either deny or hide their faith or agree to be placed on the separate AM electoral list. As the basis of AM belief is to identify as Muslim, AMs are thus unable to vote. The national identity card must be shown to cast a vote and those Ahmadis who have "Islam" stated on it also never go to polling stations due to fear that someone might complain or even shout that he/she is Ahmadi and registered as Muslim.'[30]

4.5.5 According to the July 2020 APPG report: '… the separate electoral list of Ahmadis – including their names and addresses – are published during election periods and are freely available. In the hostile anti-Ahmadi climate, this poses a grave security risk as it provides extremists with information on the residential addresses of all Ahmadis in that locality.'[31]

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[26] HRW, 'Pakistan: Ensure Ahmadi Voting Rights', 28 June 2018
[27] USSD, 'IRF Report 2020' (section II), 12 May 2021
[28] CREID, 'Violence and Discrimination against Women…' (page 1), November 2020
[29] CREID, 'Violence and Discrimination against Women…' (pages 4, 217, 229), November 2020
[30] CREID, 'Violence and Discrimination against Women…' (pages 283 to 284), November 2020
[31] APPG, 'Suffocation of the faithful' (page 42), July 2020

4.5.6 The APPG report added that 'Ahmadis have been denied voting rights in every election – local, provincial or national – in Pakistan since 1985. Even in Rabwah, the town that is home to the headquarters of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community and is overwhelmingly populated by Ahmadis, they have no vote to decide who leads local council authority.'[32]

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Section 5 updated: 24 August 2021

5. Identity documents

5.1 National Identity Cards (NICs)

5.1.1 The National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) is the government body, under the Ministry of Interior (MoI), responsible for issuing national identity cards[33]. NICs are required to apply for a driving license, obtain a national tax number (NTN), register to vote, apply for a job, open a bank account, to obtain a SIM card, open new water, electricity or gas accounts, purchase land or vehicles, and to obtain entry into educational institutions[34] [35] [36].

5.1.2 In its 2019 Yearly Report of newspaper, print and electronic media clippings, the IHRC stated that, in December 2018, the NADRA implemented a policy to ensure the religious identity of all applicants was declared when applying for an NIC[37]. Persons wishing to declare themselves as Muslim must sign a declaration titled 'Declaration in the case of Muslims'. Ahmadis must declare they are non-Muslim and sign a declaration that states 'I declare on oath that I am not a Muslim and I belong to Qadiani/Ahmadi religion.'[38] [39]

5.1.3 In email correspondence with CPIT, dated 24 April 2021, an official at the British High Commission (BHC), Islamabad, commented 'Not completing the declaration designed to ensure "the finality of the prophet" is considered an incomplete application for CNIC and the processing of the CNIC is not initiated in [such cases]. Therefore, unequivocal completion of this declaration is a must for all CNIC and passport applications.'[40]

5.1.4 Although a person's religion is not visible on an NIC, this information is held on the NADRA database[41].

5.1.5 According to data provided by NADRA, cited by The Express Tribune in April 2018, 10,205 persons had changed their religious status from Muslim to Ahmadi in the past 16 years[42]. However, as noted on the NADRA website, once a person has declared themselves Muslim, after 13 December 2018

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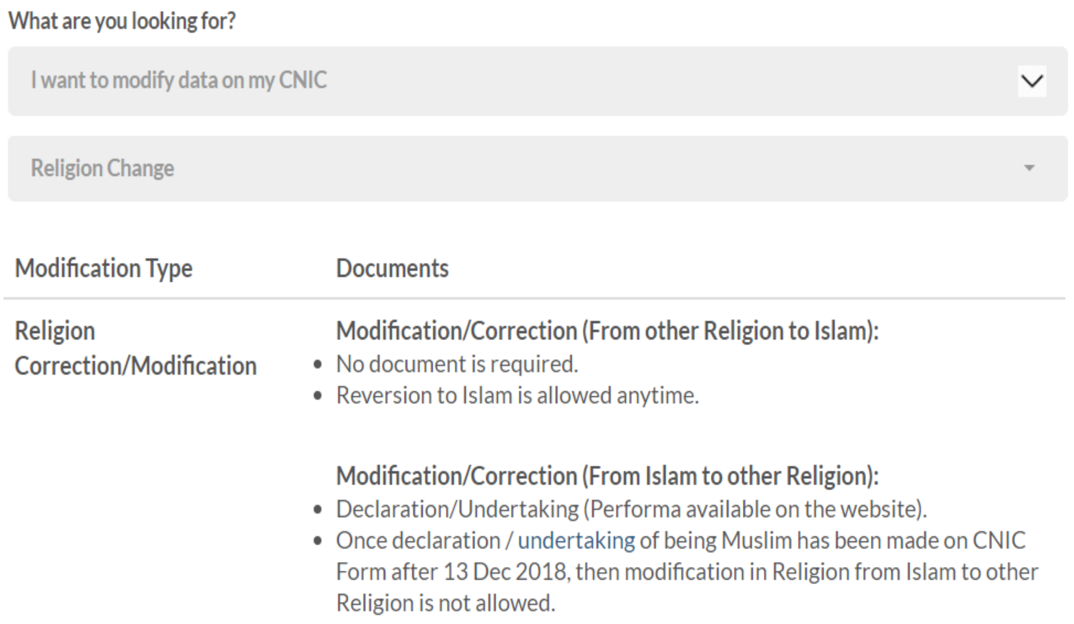
[32] APPG, 'Suffocation of the faithful' (page 42), July 2020
[33] NADRA, 'Identity Documents', no date
[34] NADRA, 'National Identity Card (NIC)', no date
[35] DFAT, 'Country Information Report Pakistan' (paragraph 5.52), 20 February 2019
[36] IHRC, '2019 Yearly Report' (page 10), July 2020
[37] IHRC, '2019 Yearly Report' (pages 5 and 10), July 2020
[38] IHRC, '2019 Yearly Report' (page 10), July 2020
[39] APPG, 'Suffocation of the faithful' (page 44), July 2020
[40] BHC, 'Email to CPIT', 24 April 2021
[41] DFAT, 'Country Information Report Pakistan' (paragraph 5.56), 20 February 2019
[42] The Express Tribune, 'NADRA's court-ordered data sharing worries Ahmadis', 2 April 2018

they can no longer apply to modify their NIC to change their religion from Islam to any other faith. A person wishing to revert to Islam may do so at any time[43].

5.1.6 The BHC official indicated in correspondence with CPIT in April 2021 that due to NADRA's policy shift, changing religion from Muslim to non-Muslim (which includes Ahmadis) would require a court order. The BHC explained the potential process:

> 'This would mean an affidavit by the applicant (litigant) seeking permission of the court to allow the change of religion. The court order in favour of the litigant would allow NADRA to change the status of religion on the CNIC/Passport. Disallowance would result in an appeal to District Court and then to High Court. Since this court proceeding would not have an "opposing party", it is considered to be straight forward. However, the issue of the lack [of] data protection in an open court hearing on the issue of apostasy would discourage any such litigation. Apostasy is not a crime under the Pakistan Criminal Code, however, it is a serious issue under Sharia law with death sentence recommendations for anyone leaving Islam as religion. "Death to apostate" is a mantra that is more or less common to all sects of Islam. Therefore, the legal window that is considered to be available [to change religion from Muslim to non-Muslim] is not much in practical terms.'[44]

5.1.7 Screen shot of NADRA website regarding change of religion[45]:



What are you looking for?

I want to modify data on my CNIC

Religion Change

Modification Type	Documents
Religion Correction/Modification	Modification/Correction (From other Religion to Islam): • No document is required. • Reversion to Islam is allowed anytime. Modification/Correction (From Islam to other Religion): • Declaration/Undertaking (Performa available on the website). • Once declaration / undertaking of being Muslim has been made on CNIC Form after 13 Dec 2018, then modification in Religion from Islam to other Religion is not allowed.

See also Ahmadi converts.

5.1.8 For general information on identity documents, see the Country Policy and Information Note on Pakistan: Documentation.

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[43] NADRA, 'Computerized National Identity Card (CNIC)', no date
[44] BHC, 'Email to CPIT', 24 April 2021
[45] NADRA, 'Computerized National Identity Card (CNIC)', no date

5.2 Passports

5.2.1 The Directorate General of Immigration and Passports (DGIP) is responsible for issuing Passports[46]. A CNIC, National Identity Card for Overseas Pakistani (NICOP) or Child Registration Certificate (CRC) is required when applying for a passport[47].

5.2.2 In January 2021, the IHRC explained the background relating to the entry of a person's religion in Pakistani passports. Numerous passport changes have been made over the years and there are periods in Pakistan's history when religious affiliation was not listed in a passport. In 2005, passports became machine readable (Machine Readable Passport – MRP). At the time MRPs were introduced, a person's religious affiliation was not included and tens of thousands of MRPs were issued without listing religion. However, under pressure from religious clerics, the government's policy changed and a religion column was added. Since MRPs are valid for 5 or 10 years, some passports would have been issued without identifying a person's religion, although these passports will now have expired[48].

5.2.3 A person's religious affiliation must be declared when applying for a passport[49], and the person's religion is noted on page 3 of the passport (see Figure 1)[50].

Figure 1



5.2.4 Those wishing to be listed as Muslims must sign an affidavit denouncing the founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim community[51] [52]. The USSD IRF Report 2020 stated 'Ahmadiyya community representatives reported the word

[46] DGIP, 'Renew your Machine Readable Passport', no date
[47] DGIP, 'Requirments for Renewal of MRP through online service', no date
[48] IHRC, 'Briefing Memo', 19 July 2021
[49] USSD, 'IRF Report 2019' (section II), 10 June 2020
[50] IHRC, 'Briefing Memo', 19 July 2021
[51] USSD, 'IRF Report 2019' (section II), 10 June 2020
[52] IHRC, 'Briefing Memo', 19 July 2021

"Ahmadi" was written on their passports if they identified themselves as such.'[53]

5.2.5 When applying for a passport, the IHRC noted that Passport Offices obtain the person's data from the NADRA database, which includes religion, and this is entered into the MRP[54]. The IHRC described the process 'The applicant has to produce his identity card (CNIC) issued by NADRA. The Data Entry Operator at the Passport Office enters electronically all information from his CNIC on to his form. He takes out a print copy. The applicant, if non-Muslim (even Ahmadis), signs it as a token of veracity of information…' In addition, a person declaring they are Muslim must sign the affidavit[55].

5.2.6 However, the IHRC noted there may be anomalies and exceptions and gave examples of cases where Pakistani passports have been issued, either in Pakistan or by the relevant authorities abroad, to some Muslims despite them not signing the affidavit[56].

5.2.7 The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) also indicated in a June 2020 report, 'Interestingly, there have been recent incidents wherein citizens have taken a stand and refused to put their signature on the controversial clause [and still received a passport – see tweet dated 27 February 2020[57]]. However, the vast majority continues to sign the declaration – which is mandatory for acquiring other identity documents as well – thus according tacit approval to the state's persecution of Ahmadis.'[58]

5.2.8 The IHRC also gave an example of a person who openly declared in their passport application that they were Ahmadi, but still received a passport which showed their religion as Muslim[59].

5.2.9 For an example of a signed declaration see: 'The day I declared my best friend kafir just so I could get a passport' published by Dawn in 2016.

5.2.10 The CREID study, published in November 2020, noted:

> 'There are various reasons for family members having different religions written in their identity documents. For instance, some members of the AMC [Ahmadi Muslim Community], usually males, have "Islam" stated as their religion. This is mainly due to their fear of not finding a job due to their Ahmadiyya faith and, therefore, not getting enough food to survive. Once "Islam" is written on an identity document, it is a very difficult and dangerous task to change the religion, say, Islam to Ahmadiyya.'[60]

5.2.11 The passport declaration barring Ahmadis from stating their religion as Muslim prevents them from making the Islamic pilgrimage of Hajj to Saudi Arabia, a

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[53] USSD, 'IRF Report 2020' (section II), 12 May 2021
[54] IHRC, 'Briefing Memo', 19 July 2021
[55] IHRC, 'Briefing Memo', 19 July 2021
[56] IHRC, 'Briefing Memo', 19 July 2021
[57] Kamal, D (@dannistan), 'Update for those who asked…', 27 February 2020
[58] HRCP, 'Conspicuous By Its Absence' (page 3), June 2020
[59] IHRC, 'Briefing Memo', 19 July 2021
[60] CREID, 'Violence and Discrimination against Women…' (page 272), November 2020

basic element of the Islamic faith[61] [62] [63].

5.2.12 For general information on passports, see the Country Policy and Information Note on Pakistan: Documentation.

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5.3 Marriage registration and nikkahs

5.3.1 According to the General Secretary of Ahmadiyya Anjuman Lahore, consulted by the Research Directorate of the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (IRB) in 2009, 'Ahmadis have their own system to register their marriages and … couples may legally register their marriage with the Ahmadiyya authorities.'[64]

5.3.2 In 2016, the Express Tribune reported that some local authorities refused to register Ahmadi marriages:

> 'Saleemudin, a Jamaat Ahmadiyya spokesperson, told The Express Tribune that they had established their own system for registering marriages. "After some effort, we were able to convince NADRA to acknowledge our marriages. Nevertheless, our people still face problems when they are asked to prove their marital relationship to embassies and consulates while applying for visas," he said.
>
> 'He said several Ahmadi families were residing in cantonments. "However, none of our marriages have been registered with the cantonment administration. They register births and deaths, but flatly refuse when it comes to marriages. They say that they only register marriages which fall under the Muslim Family Laws Ordinance 1961,"…'[65]

5.3.3 The inability to register marriages continued, as indicated in the USSD IRF Report 2020, 'Ahmadiyya Muslim community representatives stated Ahmadi families were unable to register their marriages with local administrative bodies, known as union councils, as those councils considered Ahmadis to be outside the authority of the Muslim Family Law of 1961.'[66]

5.3.4 The study on Ahmadi women published by CREID in November 2020 noted:

> 'Ahmadi marriage certificates are legal as per Pakistani law. However, a person with an Ahmadi marriage certificate who is registered as Muslim on their national identity card can be accused of apostasy. Mariya said that her husband had "Islam" written on his national identity card so that he could get [a] job. Therefore, she had two marriage certificates: one is the original issued by the AMC and the other states both bride and groom as Muslim, obtained by paying bribe money.'[67]

See also Inter-marriage.

[61] HRW, 'Pakistan: Ensure Ahmadi Voting Rights', 28 June 2018
[62] USSD, 'IRF Report 2019' (section II), 10 June 2020
[63] CREID, 'Violence and Discrimination against Women…' (page 274), November 2020
[64] IRB, 'Intermarriage between a non-Ahmadi Muslim and an Ahmadi…', 19 November 2009
[65] Express Tribune, 'Ahmadi, Christian marriages not being registered', 27 July 2016
[66] USSD, 'IRF Report 2020' (section II), 12 May 2021
[67] CREID, 'Violence and Discrimination against Women…' (page 275), November 2020

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Section 6 updated: 24 August 2021

6. Ahmadi community in Pakistan

6.1 Demography

6.1.1 The US Bureau of the Census estimated the total population of Pakistan to be over 238 million in July 2021[68], whilst the final 2017 census results, approved in April 2021, put the figure at 207.68 million[69] [70].

6.1.2 Sources indicated that most Ahmadis boycotted the census as they were not able to self-identify as Muslim[71] [72] [73], so there are no reliable statistics on the number of Ahmadis in Pakistan.

6.1.3 A 2014 report published by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Interior, based on a range of sources, referred to the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat (the main Ahmadi branch) and noted it had an estimated 600,000 adherents in Pakistan, although the group's own estimate puts the number at around 2 to 5 million[74]. The same source indicated the much smaller Lahore branch, was estimated to have about 30,000 adherents worldwide, of whom 5,000 to 10,000 were living in Pakistan[75].

6.1.4 According to data provided by the National Database Registration Authority (NADRA), cited by The Express Tribune in April 2018, there were 167,473 Ahmadis registered on the NADRA database[76]. According to the 2017 census results, 0.09% of the population was Ahmadi (recorded as Qadiani)[77], [equating to around 187,000 of the nearly 208 million population], although, as noted in March 2020 article in The Diplomat, '… this figure could easily be contested as many followers of the Ahmadiyya faith do not publicly identify themselves as Ahmadis due to fear of persecution.'[78] The USSD IRF Report 2020 noted that '… community sources put the number of Ahmadi Muslims at approximately 500,000 to 600,000'[79], whilst the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) noted in its Country Information Report for Pakistan, based on a range of sources, dated 20 February 2019, that 'Estimates of the number of Ahmadis in Pakistan range between 500,000 and 4 million.'[80]

6.1.5 According to sources, between 60,000 and 70,000 (90-95%) of the population

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68 CIA World Factbook, 'Pakistan' (People and society), 4 May 2021
69 PBS, 'Brief on Census – 2017', no date
70 PBS, 'Salient features of final results census-2017' (page 2), no date
71 Austria, 'Pakistan: Challenges & Perspectives' (page 88), October 2014
72 USSD, 'IRF Report 2020' (section I), 12 May 2021
73 DFAT, 'Country Information Report Pakistan' (paragraph 3.114), 20 February 2019
74 Austria, 'Pakistan: Challenges & Perspectives' (page 88), October 2014
75 Austria, 'Pakistan: Challenges & Perspectives' (page 89), October 2014
76 The Express Tribune, 'NADRA's court-ordered data sharing worries Ahmadis', 2 April 2018
77 PBS, 'Salient features of final results census-2017' (page 14), no date
78 The Diplomat, 'Religious Minorities in "Naya Pakistan"', 16 March 2020
79 USSD, 'IRF Report 2020' (section I), 12 May 2021
80 DFAT, 'Country Information Report Pakistan' (paragraph 3.114), 20 February 2019

of Rabwah, Punjab province, is Ahmadi[81] [82] [83].

6.1.6 In a meeting with the UK Home Office in March 2015, the notes of which were reviewed in July 2021 by the IHRC, an official from the Ahmadiyya Muslim Association UK (AMA UK) stated that the main population centres for Ahmadis in Pakistan, aside from Rabwah, were Sialkot, Quetta, Multan, Rawalpindi, Karachi, Lahore and Faisalabad[84]. According to the 2014 Austrian Federal Ministry of Interior report, other areas with Ahmadi populations included Peshawar, Khewra, Sargodha, Bhalwal, Shahpur and Gujaranwala[85].

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6.2 Life in Rabwah

6.2.1 A response on religious and ethnic groups in Rabwah, by the IRB Research Directorate, dated 11 January 2017, cited Simon Ross Valentine, a freelance British lecturer and researcher of Islam and comparative religions, as stating in 2014, 'Ahmadis in Rabwah "enjoy considerable freedom and prosperity".' The IRB report further noted 'However, sources report that Ahmadis are not permitted to hold religious conferences in Rabwah … and that peaceful gatherings by the religious group are not permitted by authorities'.[86]

6.2.2 In summarising its findings, the Bajwa/Khan study indicated that 'Rabwah holds a special place in the life of all Ahmadis...'[87] The report added:

> 'Ahmadis scattered all over Pakistan relate with Rabwah as a secure place, as something, perhaps the only thing proudly their own, and as a place where their identity is not a taboo, and where it need not to be hidden. Conversations with members reveal that compared with other cities of Pakistan, Rabwah allows a great level of freedom to the Ahmadis to organize themselves, and carry out their religious activities peacefully.'[88]

6.2.3 The Bajwa/Khan study also found that in Rabwah:

> 'Interactions with the community members and participation in their activities also simultaneously inform that Rabwah, despite being a city that is predominantly Ahmadi, remains a sensitive place, where individuals are beleaguered by an undying sense of threat, which effectively compromises their daily life and routine activities.
>
> 'Community meetings at local mosques take place under armed security men... while a congregation larger than 30 people is not allowed within the city. The meeting points and timings of ijlaas [sessions] are not pre-announced, and the decades old tradition of national-level events once held in Rabwah have come to a complete halt since the attack on Ahmadiyya mosques in Lahore in 2010. Naturally, the activities of the mosques are also constrained, where the Jumma [Friday] prayers are only attended by men

[81] Chaudhary, A, 'Surviving as an Ahmadi in Pakistan', 7 April 2020
[82] USCIRF, 'Abdul Shakoor', no date
[83] IRB, 'Pakistan: Religious and ethnic groups in Rabwah…', 11 January 2017
[84] AMA UK, 'Note of CPIT meeting', 26 March 2015
[85] Austria, 'Pakistan: Challenges & Perspectives' (page 89), October 2014
[86] IRB, 'Pakistan: Religious and ethnic groups in Rabwah…', 11 January 2017
[87] Bajwa, L.S, and Khan, S.E, 'Exploring Rabwah…' (page 1,617), March/April 2015
[88] Bajwa, L.S, and Khan, S.E, 'Exploring Rabwah…' (page 1,617), March/April 2015

unlike previously where women in large numbers used to come for the Jummah.'[89]

6.2.4 According to Reuters, reporting from Rabwah in November 2017 'Many Ahmadis in Pakistan say they only truly feel safe in Rabwah…'[90]

6.2.5 In December 2017, The New York Times described 'Rabwah – where portraits of the Ahmadi sect's turbaned founder, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, are ubiquitous – has a veneer of calm, even affluence, that is at odds with the growing hatred against the sect elsewhere in the country.' However, the report also noted 'The legal changes ['Anti-Ahmadi' laws] have left the sect particularly vulnerable, and attacks on Ahmadi businesses, places of worship and graveyards are common.' The report added that Rabwah's largest mosque, Masjid-e-Aqsa, which can hold 20,000 people, was abandoned for smaller neighbourhood mosques following the twin attacks on Ahmadi mosques in Lahore in 2010[91].

6.2.6 Describing everyday activities, The New York Times noted:

> 'In a bustling bazaar on the busy Aqsa Road, women in thick button-down loose robe abayas distinctive to the Ahmadis could be seen smelling oranges at fruit stalls, haggling with jewelry store owners and hailing yellow taxis. In neighboring towns like Faisalabad and Chiniot, shop signs warn Ahmadis not to enter: "First enter Islam, then enter this shop!" But here in the bazaar, almost every second store had the word Ahmadi in its name: Ahmadi Tailors. Ahmadi General Store. Ahmadi Hardware.
>
> 'After nightfall, children played cricket in well-kept parks while their fathers gathered around coal heaters. Others could be seen walking back from school, bowed under the weight of colorful knapsacks. Rabwah's few, overcrowded schools must run on two shifts – morning and evening – to make sure everyone gets an education.'[92] (See also Education).

6.2.7 Despite daily life continuing for Ahmadis in Rabwah, The New York Times added that '… hard-liner Muslims come to Rabwah, too. When the annual processions to mark Eid Milad-un Nabi, birthday celebrations for the Prophet Muhammad, roll through the city, the authorities warn Ahmadis to shut their businesses and lock themselves inside their homes, as procession leaders hurl "unrepeatable" expletives against Ahmadi leaders and declare them "worthy of being murdered".'[93]

6.2.8 In 2017, Reuters also reported on anti-Ahmadi sentiment:

> '… on the edge of Rabwah lies a small settlement and a mosque run by a right-wing Islamist organization that openly professes hatred for Ahmadis.
>
> 'The organization, Khatm-e-Nubuwwat (Finality of the Prophet), built the mosque on land the Punjab government ordered confiscated from Ahmadis in 1975 for low-income housing.

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[89] Bajwa, L.S, and Khan, S.E, 'Exploring Rabwah…' (page 1,617), March/April 2015
[90] Reuters, 'Pakistan's long-persecuted Ahmadi minority fear becoming,,,', 16 November 2017
[91] New York Times, 'Shunned by Pakistan's Muslims…', 27 December 2017
[92] New York Times, 'Shunned by Pakistan's Muslims…', 27 December 2017
[93] New York Times, 'Shunned by Pakistan's Muslims…', 27 December 2017

‘Khatm-e-Nubuwwat has been at the forefront of initiating blasphemy allegations against Ahmadis. Every year for 36 years, the group has held an anti-Ahmadi rally at the mosque.

‘“Qadianis are the enemies of the prophet,” said Aziz ur Rehman, an organizer of the Rabwah conference, adding: “A country that was made in the name of the prophet cannot accept Qadianis”.’[94]

See also Societal treatment and attitudes: Hate speech and incitement of violence.

6.2.9 According to the DFAT report ‘Ahmadis report they feel safest in Rabwah, although an Ahmadi who had drawn adverse official or societal attention would not be safe there.’[95]

6.2.10 However, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in Pakistan told the IHRC, as cited in a note to CPIT, dated 8 June 2018, that:

‘… Rabwah is no safer than any other place in Pakistan and potentially a risky place to live, if one goes by the expressed wishes and intentions of anti-Ahmadi sentiment in Rabwah from mainstream Muslims. It should also be highlighted that anti-Ahmadi laws are equally applicable in Rabwah. As a result of government policy, for years a large number of Ahmadis from Rabwah faced prosecution in courts. These included the high echelon of Ahmadi leadership. Twice, on orders of the political leadership, the entire Ahmadi population of Rabwah was booked in fabricated criminal cases.’[96]

6.2.11 In an April 2020 article, Reporting Fellow for the Pulitzer Center, Ayilah Chaudhary, noted that, according to Mirza Usman Ahmad, a freelance writer and advocate for the Ahmadiyya community:

‘Though Rabwah is in the same country that inflicts the state-sanctioned and societal oppression, many Ahmadis experience a rare “strength in numbers” within its isolated radius… “There is this sort of safety net in Rabwah that your neighbor will be Ahmadi, but the hostility of Pakistan still applies in here and beyond,” says Ahmad, who has worked in Rabwah for 14 years. “There have been threats and incidents – it's not like the people here are immune to anything”.’[97]

6.2.12 The July 2020 APPG report cited Ahmadi community spokesperson, Saleem ud Din, who indicated:

‘… Ahmadis face an existential threat in Pakistan. Even in Rabwah, the small town that is owned by the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community and where a large proportion of its population are Ahmadi, is under constant threat. An interview with the community’s official spokesman in Pakistan notes how Rabwah has become perhaps the biggest target for extremist activity against members of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community.’[98]

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[94] Reuters, ‘Pakistan's long-persecuted Ahmadi minority fear becoming,,,’, 16 November 2017
[95] DFAT, ‘Country Information Report Pakistan’ (paragraph 3.134), 20 February 2019
[96] IHRC, ‘Note to CPIT’ (paragraph 6), 8 June 2018
[97] Chaudhary, A, ‘Surviving as an Ahmadi in Pakistan’, 7 April 2020
[98] APPG, ‘Suffocation of the faithful’ (page 69), July 2020

6.2.13 The same source also noted 'Though Rabwah provides basic amenities to its residents, it does not have a business or industry sector. Many residents earn their money through owning a market stall. Those who flee persecution and arrive in Rabwah soon realise that they have no prospects in Rabwah and have no choice but to move out and return to the same issues they fled in the first instance.'[99]

6.2.14 Saleem ud Din concluded '… Rabwah remains unsafe for its residents and is certainly not a safe haven for Ahmadi Muslims seeking refuge there.'[100]

See also Discrimination and harassment and Attacks against Ahmadis.

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[99] APPG, 'Suffocation of the faithful' (page 69), July 2020
[100] APPG, 'Suffocation of the faithful' (page 69), July 2020

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6.6 Inter-marriage

6.6.1 Marriages between Ahmadi and non-Ahmadi Muslims were considered to be rare[101] [102]. According to the General Secretary of Ahmadiyya Anjuman Lahore, consulted by the IRB in 2009, such marriages would not be recognised as legal in Pakistan. In contrast, the National General Secretary and the Eastern Canada Regional Amir of Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at Canada said intermarriage between an Ahmadi and non-Ahmadi Muslim was legal, but would be 'condemned by religious clerics and … [that] a biased judge can declare the marriage null and void…'[103]

6.6.2 According to the Ahmadi sources consulted, the IRB said that intermarriages would be discouraged by families and that religious clerics may pressure families to disown children who marry outside their faith[104]. The study on poor Ahmadi women published by CREID noted that Ahmadi women are prohibited from marrying non-Ahmadi men because, according to the Ahmadi Muslim Community, '… if a woman marries outside her faith, she and her children will be exposed to non-Muslim and non-Ahmadi culture and practices…'[105]

[101] IRB, 'Intermarriage between a non-Ahmadi Muslim and an Ahmadi…', 19 November 2009
[102] AMA UK, 'Note of CPIT meeting', 26 March 2015
[103] IRB, 'Intermarriage between a non-Ahmadi Muslim and an Ahmadi…', 19 November 2009
[104] IRB, 'Intermarriage between a non-Ahmadi Muslim and an Ahmadi…', 19 November 2009
[105] CREID, 'Violence and Discrimination against Women…' (page 284), November 2020

6.6.3 In 2015, the AMA UK gave similar responses regarding inter-marriage and marriage of Ahmadi women:

> '… intermarriage with other sects was uncommon. In cases where this does occur, an Ahmadi man would need permission to marry outside the Ahmadi faith. There are very strict conditions on women marrying outside the faith and this would only happen, with permission, in extreme circumstances.
>
> 'All Ahmadi marriages (even if inter-sect) must be performed by an Ahmadi cleric. If a non-Ahmadi cleric performed the marriage the parties would be ex-communicated.'[106]

6.6.4 In February 2021, the Rabwah Times reported on the arrest and detention of 2 Ahmadi brothers for marrying Muslim women. The men, who were detained in September 2020 following their marriage in June of the same year, were charged with blasphemy and marriage fraud[107].

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7. Religious practices

7.1 Organisational structure and traditions

7.1.1 The 2015 Bajwa/Khan study on Ahmadis in Rabwah reported that:

> 'The Ahmadiyya is a religious community centered around very strong oral and written traditions, with a distinctive emphasis on performance of religious practices. The community life is organized and structured around tanzeems, or bodies along age and gender – namely Ansaar-Ullah (men of age above 40), Khudaam-ul-Ahmadiyyat (men above age 18), Ittefal-ul-Ahmadiyyat (boys below 18) Lajna Ima-Ullah (women above age 18) and Nasirat-ul-Ahmadiyyat (girls below 18).'[108]

7.1.2 The Bajwa/Khan study described how local branches organised their activities for members, and the general practices members undertake:

> 'Each body organizes members around both religious and secular activities like sports, speech competitions, and educational endeavors. Every member is intimately linked to the body and is gathered on several occasions on [a] weekly, monthly and yearly basis. Records of private religious activities is also maintained on [a] monthly basis through these bodies, where members are asked about the number of prayers offered, text or books of Mirza Ghulam Ahmed being read, letter writing to the Khalifa, Friday sermon being watched etc. The purpose of this, as shared by the respondents [to the study], is to enhance the levels of prayer and devotion amongst members and urge them to keep raising their efforts. The community is very closely linked, where individuals enter Ahmadiyyat by undertaking an oath of allegiance, the bayah [bai'at[109]], to the supreme head of the community that binds them to the shared norms and values of the movement. Moreover, the

[106] AMA UK, 'Note of CPIT meeting', 26 March 2015
[107] Rabwah Times, 'Pakistan arrests two 'non-Muslim' men for marrying Muslim…', 15 February 2021
[108] Bajwa, L.S, and Khan, S.E, 'Exploring Rabwah…' (page 1,616), March/April 2015
[109] Al Islam, 'Conditions of Initiation (Bai'at)', no date

existing members revise this oath on yearly basis in order to remind themselves of the duties and obligations that they have upon them as followers of Mirza Ghulam Ahmed.

'Letter writing to the Khalifa is a very consistent and prominent feature of the Ahmadi lifestyle, where each member the researcher spoke to maintains a personal and regular correspondence with the Khalifa, especially on important life occasions like birth of a child, death of loved one, illness in the family, academic achievements, building a house, undertaking any new project, and also seeking advice on marriage and career choices.'[110]

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7.2 Proselytising and Tabligh

7.2.1 Article 298c of the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC) prohibits an Ahmadi from preaching and propagating their religious beliefs[111]. The IHRC/AHRC 2017 fact finding report noted that:

> 'Under this article an Ahmadi becomes liable to be imprisoned for up to three years or face a fine if he or she "preaches or propagates his faith, or invites others to accept his faith, by words, either spoken or written, or by visible representations, or in any manner whatsoever. Further, Article 298C forbids Ahmadis from "posing as Muslims" directly or indirectly "or from outraging the feelings of Muslims". The loose wording of the law means it is regularly abused to harass and discriminate against Ahmadis.'[112]

7.2.2 The IHRC note to CPIT, updated July 2021, stated that the legislation in the PPC '… not only prohibits preaching and other forms of proselytizing but also in practice restricts other elements of manifesting religious belief, such as holding open discourse about religion with non-Ahmadis, even where these do not amount to proselytizing.'[113] (see 'Anti-Ahmadi' laws).

7.2.3 The IHRC described the importance of Tabligh, described as 'the possibilities for Ahmadis to profess their faith and the possibilities to express it publicly, through evangelism or otherwise'. The IHRC noted that, according to the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, the definition of Tabligh was 'preaching, conveying the message of Ahmadiyyat to non-Ahmadis (i.e. those who are not Ahmadis).'[114]

7.2.4 The IHRC added, in its note to CPIT, dated 8 June 2018, that:

> 'It should be noted that the law disallows Tabligh even for self-defence. The vernacular press repeatedly accuses Ahmadis of being "the worst enemies of Islam and Pakistan". If Ahmadis say that it is not true, and explain their position, they are accused of preaching or propagating. This is leading to a growing resentment of Ahmadis and anti-Ahmadi sentiments taking root in

[110] Bajwa, L.S, and Khan, S.E, 'Exploring Rabwah…' (page 1,616), March/April 2015
[111] Pakistan Penal Code (Articles 298b and 298c), 6 October 1860
[112] IHRC/AHRC, 'Ahmadis in Pakistan Face an Existential Threat', (page 47), April 2017
[113] IHRC, 'Note to CPIT' (paragraph 1.2), July 2021
[114] IHRC, 'Note to CPIT' (paragraph 1.1), July 2021

the minds of the younger generation as they do not know any other narrative.' [115]

7.2.5 The IHRC noted that in terms of an Ahmadis religious knowledge for undertaking Tabligh, this question was raised with the Imam of Ahmadiyya London Mosque, Mr Ataul Mujeeb Rashed, who said to the IHRC that:

'"… it cannot be denied that one who is well versed and has educated himself with all the intellectual and philosophical arguments used by the community, such as a Minister of Religion who has been through a seven years' full-time course at a theosophical academy, would be a well-rounded and knowledgeable member who can teach the faith to others effectively. This does not mean that a less well-educated person could not discuss religious matters with his contacts. Therefore it is plausible that an Ahmadi can engage in preaching activities with non-Ahmadis despite limited English. Even the mere fact that he/she might offer an invitation to a non-Ahmadi to an Ahmadi Muslim community function is a form of Tabligh since he is seeking to promote his faith. Even when he offers hospitality to another this is laying the foundations for Tabligh and is indeed regarded as a form of Tabligh by our community and by those who oppose our faith community".'[116]

7.2.6 The IHRC continued:

'In short, Tabligh does not mean per se that one must proselytize openly and in public. It takes many forms and has many meanings such as one's behaviour, hospitality, giving literature, doing charitable work, meeting people and engaging with them on faith to more direct means such as holding Tabligh Stalls, leafleting, engaging directly with people, and holding events. All these fall under the ambit of Tabligh. It is all about promoting the Ahmadi faith and will depend entirely on the circumstances and environment in which Ahmadis are present.

'In the UK, Ahmadis undertake this in many forms, such as leafleting, coffee mornings, charitable work, inviting non-Ahmadis to Ahmadi mosques or homes of Ahmadis to events. It has to be borne in mind that this is not totally possible in Pakistan as it is illegal for Ahmadis to undertake or participate in such activities.

'Those who take the risk to take part in such activities would do so discreetly and commonly through charitable work subtly once they have got to know people and then possibly by inviting them to their homes.'[117] (see Verification process).

7.2.7 The IHRC added:

'Having spoken to the Ahmadi Community in Pakistan and the United Kingdom, it is clear that Ahmadis feel that their very essence has been sapped and outlawed by the fact that they are not allowed to express any aspect of their faith which has any connection with Islam or from referring to

[115] IHRC, 'Note to CPIT' (paragraph 7), 8 June 2018
[116] IHRC, 'Note to CPIT' (paragraph 1.7), July 2021
[117] IHRC, 'Note to CPIT' (paragraph 1.7), July 2021

their faith as “Islam”. Article 298c forbids Ahmadis from “posing as Muslims” directly or indirectly “or from outraging the feelings of Muslims”. The loose wording means abuse of the law to harass Ahmadis is rife.’[118]

7.2.8 The IHRC/AHRC 2017 fact-finding report cited the effects of anti-Ahmadi legislation:

‘Ahmadi Muslims cannot openly profess their faith publicly through evangelism or otherwise. The definition of proselytizing is being stretched for Ahmadi Muslims and is now limited to activities such (but not exclusively) as serving humanity through medical camps which may lead to discussions about Ahmadiyyat although not publicly; Ahmadis discussing Ahmadiyyat with non-Ahmadis once they have become familiar with them although they run the risk of being reported; for women the attire generally worn by Ahmadi ladies can be a means and way of proselytizing – again this attracts the risk of being discriminated against particularly socially where they are easy targets. The Mission heard that performing the aforementioned activities is still not an easy task as it means there is risk to the relevant Ahmadi and can have negative repercussions.’[119]

7.2.9 The IHRC note to CPIT stated:

‘Having spoken to and interview[ed] hundreds of members of the Ahmadiyya faith in Pakistan and asylum seekers in the United Kingdom, it has become evident that Ahmadis resort to covert means of propagating their faith in Pakistan and in most cases only do so when a relationship has been established with an individual and they feel it is safe to broach the subject. Any actions including charitable works that may show the Ahmadi faith in a positive light may be seized upon by opponents of the community as attempts to propagate the faith. Since the law forbids Ahmadis from propagating their faith Ahmadis thus resort to more subtle means of impressing others in the hope of leading by example whereby good works and behaviour may attract others towards the faith.’[120]

7.2.10 The IHRC continued:

‘Whilst the Ahmadi community in Pakistan undertakes, from time to time, humanitarian and charitable works either directly or indirectly through NGOs [non-governmental organisations], they also take the opportunities they present to engage in dialogue with any who may display an interest in the faith. Accordingly, medical camps where free medicines and treatment are distributed to the wider community and community services such as road cleaning and repairs etc. present gentle means of reaching out, if and when the occasion becomes propitious.

‘Further all these things come under the ambit of Tabligh or an Ahmadi propagating his/her faith. The Ahmadiyya Muslim community explained that whilst propagation of faith was important to them this took many forms from direct to indirect Tabligh. In fact, the Ahmadiyya Muslim community mentioned that being identified as an Ahmadi in Pakistan is Tabligh itself.

[118] IHRC, ‘Note to CPIT’ (paragraphs 1.8 to 1.9), July 2021
[119] IHRC/AHRC, ‘Ahmadis in Pakistan Face an Existential Threat’, (page 47), April 2017
[120] IHRC, ‘Note to CPIT’ (paragraph 1.5), July 2021

Further, the very essence of Tabligh is dependent on the circumstances. In some circumstances it would be direct and open, whilst in others it would be indirect or discrete.'[121]

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8. Ahmadi women

8.1.1 Reporting on discrimination faced by Ahmadi women, the IHRC/AHRC 2017 fact-finding report noted 'In a patriarchal society such as Pakistan, women from religious minorities face extensive and pervasive gender based discrimination throughout their lives. Ahmadi women experience similar levels of harassment and social alienation as Ahmadi men in their day to day interactions, education and employment.'[122]

8.1.2 The IHRC/AHRC 2017 fact-finding report added:

> 'The Ahmadi women who were interviewed for this report described being fearful for the safety of their family, their children and themselves. The segregation that women encounter once people know they are Ahmadi is like a form of religious apartheid which impedes their ability to move independently in society, at work and during routine activities like shopping or going to the market. Ahmadi women face overt discrimination when shopping. Some shops display signs and banners that state we do not deal with Qadiyanis. Shopkeepers ban them from entering shops to buy goods or refuse to serve them. HA and her friends went shopping, and at the payment counter, after picking out some clothing, she was asked to disclose her faith because of her dress. The shopkeeper refused to take their payment. Once they left, 3 men on motorbikes attacked them, stole their jewellery at gunpoint and said: "because you're Ahmadi we are allowed to shoot you". According to DB, one shopkeeper told her, "You are Ahmadi, we will not give you anything, don't come in my shop, get out of my shop". Many women said local shopkeepers do not serve them, which means that have to travel between twenty minutes and up to two hours away from where they lived to acquire basic groceries and household items.'[123]

8.1.3 The November 2020 CREID study noted that, since the attacks on Ahmadiyya mosques in Lahore in 2010, Ahmadi women no longer attend mosques for prayer for security reasons[124]. The same source stated that Ahmadi women face more harassment than Ahmadi men as they are recognisable by their distinctive attire[125].

See also Ahmadi dress and identifying characteristics and Life in Rabwah.

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[121] IHRC, 'Note to CPIT' (paragraph 1.6), July 2021
[122] IHRC/AHRC, 'Ahmadis in Pakistan Face an Existential Threat', (page 43), April 2017
[123] IHRC/AHRC, 'Ahmadis in Pakistan Face an Existential Threat', (page 43), April 2017
[124] CREID, 'Violence and Discrimination against Women…' (page 235), November 2020
[125] CREID, 'Violence and Discrimination against Women…' (page 235), November 2020

9. Ahmadi converts

9.1.1 A person who converts from Islam to another faith or who is seen to renounce Islam in any other way can be accused of apostasy and targeted for blasphemy, which carries the death penalty[126] [127] [128].

9.1.2 According to sources consulted by the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB) of Canada's Research Directorate in 2012, Pakistani society in general is extremely hostile to converts from Islam to other faiths with reports of converts being harassed, attacked and 'tortured'[129]. One source stated that 'attacks on those who have converted can re-occur years or even decades after they have changed religion.'[130]

9.1.3 According to data provided by NADRA, cited in April 2018 by The Express Tribune, 10,205 people had changed their religious status from Muslim to Ahmadi in the past 16 years[131], though it was not clear if these changes were due to conversion. The Express Tribune indicated that, in some cases, changes were made after national identity cards were issued incorrectly declaring an Ahmadi's religion as Muslim[132].

9.1.4 In its note to CPIT, the IHRC said 'The Ahmadiyya Community in Pakistan confirmed to the IHRC that they do get converts but the exact figures were not confirmed. This was corroborated by speaking to some converts in Pakistan. It is fair to say that they do not advertise their conversion to the Ahmadi faith [to avoid discrimination and harassment].'[133]

9.1.5 Although section 298c of the Pakistan Penal Code (see 'Anti-Ahmadi' laws) bans Ahmadis from seeking converts[134], religious conversion is not in itself illegal[135], but as of December 2018 NADRA denied a persons right to change their religion from Islam to another faith on national identity cards[136] (see National identity Cards (NICs)).

9.1.6 As noted in the DFAT report, religious conversion from Islam may be seen as blasphemous and '… can result in prosecution under blasphemy laws [see Blasphemy laws] or familial or communal violence.'[137] The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) reported in its 2017 Annual Report that, according to an 'anti-Ahmadi' resolution passed by the Azad Kashmir (AJK) Assembly, 'Muslims who joined the Ahmadiyya sect were to be designated apostates (murtad) and subjected to effective penal action.'[138]

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[126] CSW, 'House of Lords Hearing', (pages 2-3), 10-11 November 2015
[127] CREID, 'Violence and Discrimination against Women…' (page 184), November 2020
[128] EASO, 'EASO COI Meeting Report: Pakistan 16-17 October 2017' (page 42), February 2018
[129] IRB, 'Pakistan: Religious conversion, including treatment of converts…', 14 January 2013
[130] IRB, 'Pakistan: Religious conversion, including treatment of converts…', 14 January 2013
[131] The Express Tribune, 'NADRA's court-ordered data sharing worries Ahmadis', 2 April 2018
[132] The Express Tribune, 'NADRA's court-ordered data sharing worries Ahmadis', 2 April 2018
[133] IHRC, 'Note to CPIT' (paragraph 3.3), July 2021
[134] Pakistan Penal Code (Articles 298b and 298c), 6 October 1860
[135] DFAT, 'Country Information Report Pakistan' (paragraph 3.81), 20 February 2019
[136] NADRA, 'Computerized National Identity Card (CNIC)', no date
[137] DFAT, 'Country Information Report Pakistan' (paragraph 3.81), 20 February 2019
[138] HRCP, 'State of Human Rights in 2017', (page 86), March 2018

9.1.7 The official website of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, Al Islam, provided information on the process for joining the community[139], and the ‘Conditions of Initiation (Bai’at)’[140].

9.1.8 In view of the fact that a person who converts from Islam to another faith or who is seen to renounce Islam in any other way can be accused of apostasy and targeted for blasphemy[141] [142] [143], information provided by the IRB Research Directorate in November 2009 on Ahmadi converts remains relevant. The IRB outlined the treatment of converts to the Ahmadi faith in Pakistan. Ahmadiyya leaders in Canada reported to the IRB that non-Ahmadi Muslims who convert to the Ahmadi religion could face physical torture, eviction from their families, social segregation or even death at the hands of their families or religious leaders. The report noted:

> ‘In correspondence with the Research Directorate, the National General Secretary of Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at Canada stated that a non-Ahmadi Muslim who converts to the Ahmadi faith “will face extreme persecution which could be ... physical torture, expulsion from family, social boycott, murder or a combination of all” ... The Eastern Canada Regional Amir of Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at Canada stated that violence against converts can come from both their immediate family and religious leaders ... The Eastern Canada Regional Amir further stated that there is a fatwa [religious ruling] which states that non-Ahmadi Muslims who convert to the Ahmadi faith should be killed within three days of their conversion ... Further information on the fatwa could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.’[144]

9.1.9 The IRB response also noted:

> ‘The General Secretary of Ahmadiyya Anjuman Lahore provided the following information on the consequences of both public conversion and private conversion:
>
> ‘“[I]f the conversion is declared in public then such a person has to face severe consequences and he would be legally declared non-Muslim and liable to be killed...
>
> ‘“If the case is not declared and such conversion remains secret then ... such a person escapes legal punishment but still faces mental torture and prejudicial treatment”. …
>
> ‘In a telephone interview with the Research Directorate, the Eastern Canada Regional Amir corroborated that some people do not advertise their conversion to the Ahmadi faith…’[145]

9.1.10 The IHRC stated in its note to CPIT, updated July 2021:

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[139] Al Islam, ‘Declaration of Initiation’, no date
[140] Al Islam, ‘Conditions of Initiation (Bai’at)’, no date
[141] CSW, ‘House of Lords Hearing’, (pages 2-3), 10-11 November 2015
[142] CREID, ‘Violence and Discrimination against Women…’ (page 184), November 2020
[143] EASO, ‘EASO COI Meeting Report: Pakistan 16-17 October 2017’ (page 42), February 2018
[144] IRB, ‘Pakistan: The situation of non-Ahmadi Muslims who convert’, 23 November 2009
[145] IRB, ‘Pakistan: The situation of non-Ahmadi Muslims who convert’, 23 November 2009

'Those who have converted face social boycotts in their society, marital problems with pressure from the side of the family on the partner who has not converted to the Ahmadi faith. This issue is further compounded if there are children.

'It is also common for converts to not reveal to their family or friends that they have converted to the Ahmadi faith.

'In one case in the UK, a lady … explained that her first husband left Ahmadiyyat due to pressure from his family. He told this lady to also leave so that they could remain married. When she did not, clerics, particularly from Khatme Nabuwwat started to cause problems for her which eventually led her to leave Pakistan.'[146]

9.1.11 The CREID study of November 2020 indicated that, due to discrimination, for example, when applying for jobs '… newly converted Ahmadiyya also carry their old religious identity with them. In such cases, people mostly change their religion to Ahmadiyya on their identity documents after they have migrated to other countries.'[147]

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10. State treatment and attitudes

10.1 Representation in government

10.1.1 The USSD IRF Report 2020 noted 'The requirement that Muslim elected officials swear an oath affirming their belief that Mohammed is the final prophet of Islam continued to discourage Ahmadi Muslims from seeking public office.'[148] Pulitzer Center Reporting Fellow Ayilah Chaudhary noted in an April 2020 article that Ahmadis '… cannot hold governmental positions without publicly denouncing Mirza Ghulam Ahmad.'[149]

10.1.2 In September 2018, Ahmadi economist Atif Mian was invited to join the government's Economic Advisory Committee[150]. However, after pressure from religious clerics, Mian was asked to step down[151] [152].

10.1.3 It was noted in the DFAT report that 'Government policy restricts Ahmadis joining government service, and imposes career ceilings for those who do obtain public sector jobs. In the military, which is widely regarded as the most meritocratic institution in Pakistan, Ahmadis face an "unwritten" promotion ceiling at brigadier level.'[153]

10.1.4 On 5 May 2020, the government set up the National Commission for Minorities (NCM), aimed at protecting minority rights, which includes members

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[146] IHRC, 'Note to CPIT' (paragraphs 3.4 to 3.6), July 2021
[147] CREID, 'Violence and Discrimination against Women…' (page 272), November 2020
[148] USSD, 'IRF Report 2020' (section II), 12 May 2021
[149] Chaudhary, A, 'Surviving as an Ahmadi in Pakistan', 7 April 2020
[150] USSD, 'IRF Report 2018' (section II), 21 June 2019
[151] APPG, 'Suffocation of the faithful' (page 64), July 2020
[152] PIPS/FES, 'Strengthening Governance in Pakistan…' (page 60), December 2020
[153] DFAT, 'Country Information Report Pakistan' (paragraph 3.132), 20 February 2019

of the Hindu, Sikh, Christian, Parsi and Kalash communities[154] [155]. Whilst Ahmadis were initially set to be represented in the NCM, this decision was withdrawn following criticism by right-wing Islamist groups, government ministers and allies[156] [157] [158]. Following a cabinet meeting, Information Minister, Shibli Faraz, said that Ahmadis could not join the NCM as, according to the Minister for Religious Affairs, Noorul Haq Qadri, they 'do not fall in the definition of minorities.'[159] [160] Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, Ali Muhammad Khan, said Ahmadis could only become part of the commission if they declared themselves non-Muslims as per the constitution[161].

10.1.5 The November 2020 report published by CREID indicated:

> 'There are special minority seats in each provincial and national assembly. However, unlike other religious minorities, such as Christians and Hindus, AMs [Ahmadis] have no representation in the assemblies. Neither are they included on any government committee. Even the National Commission for Minorities (NCM), whose members include all the other minorities, is not represented by an AM. For the Ahmadi people to access these special minority seats they would have to accept their "minority" status, which would mean stating they are non-Muslim.'[162]

10.1.6 The report also noted:

> 'Although the government has a 5 per cent quota reserved for minorities in government jobs, no Ahmadi has been offered a job as part of it. As previously explained, for Ahmadi people to be included in the quota for minorities, they would have to accept a "non=Muslim" status; and even when Ahmadi people have disclosed their status on identity documents, automatically placing themselves in the "minority" category, none of them have been offered a job under this quota.'[163]

See also Employment.

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10.2 Anti-Ahmadi rhetoric

10.2.1 The USSD IRF Report 2020 noted that:

> 'Government officials and politicians attended and spoke at multiple Khatm-e-Nabuwat (Finality of Prophethood) conferences held in major cities and at religious sites around the country. These conferences were organized by groups that stated they were defending the teaching that Mohammed is the

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154 HRW, 'Pakistan: Ahmadis Kept Off Minorities Commission', 8 May 2020
155 Dawn, 'Govt notifies reconstituted commission for minorities', 12 May 2020
156 The Diplomat, 'How Effective Is Pakistan's Newly Established National…?', 13 May 2020
157 Dawn, 'Cabinet approves easing lockdown after May 9', 6 May 2020
158 VoA, 'Pakistani Ahmadi Leaders Fear Backlash After New Minority Commission…', 18 May 2020
159 Dawn, 'Cabinet approves easing lockdown after May 9', 6 May 2020
160 HRW, 'Pakistan: Ahmadis Kept Off Minorities Commission', 8 May 2020
161 The Diplomat, 'How Effective Is Pakistan's Newly Established National…?', 13 May 2020
162 CREID, 'Violence and Discrimination against Women…' (page 240), November 2020
163 CREID, 'Violence and Discrimination against Women…' (page 258), November 2020

final prophet but were often characterized by both secular and Ahmadi critics as engaging in hate speech against Ahmadi Muslims.'[164]

For more information on Khatm-e-Nabuwat, see Hate speech and incitement of violence.

10.2.2 The same source noted 'On November 9 [2019], [ruling party] PTI politician and former minister for science and technology Azam Swati said in a live talk show broadcast that he and PM Khan both "sent curses" upon Ahmadis, responding to Islamist politicians' accusations that PM Khan was sympathetic to the Amhadiyya [sic] community.'[165]

10.2.3 The DFAT report noted in February 2019, 'Public advocates for the Ahmadi community face significant risk of violence; although the community claims some political leaders privately support them.'[166]

10.2.4 The HRCP's June 2020 report described the following event involving the Assistant Commissioner of Attock, Punjab province:

'In December 2019, Attock Assistant Commissioner Jannat Hussain Nekokara, while delivering a speech at an event marking the International Human Rights Day, called for promoting unity by ending internal differences, and named the prominent sects of Islam along with the Ahmadiyyas to highlight the various kinds of divisions that exist in society. A few hours later, a group of protesters, mostly students, gathered outside the district administration office chanting slogans against her for the "pro-Ahmadi" statement. Instead of defending one of their own and letting the law deal with agitators, the district administration, led by the deputy commissioner, welcomed the students so Nekokara could "clarify" her stance directly. A video of Nekokara being verbally assaulted and forced to apologise for her comments went viral on social media. In the video, one of her own colleagues seeks an explanation from Nekokara, saying that since she mentioned Ahmadis alongside Shias and Sunnis it appears that she equated them as an Islamic sect and should thus clarify her stance. Repeatedly denying the charges in front of the raging students, who could not grasp the concept of any kind of unity with Ahmadis citing their status in the Constitution as "enemies" and not just non-Muslims, the video concludes with the assistant commissioner declaring that "Qadiyanis are Kafirs" (Ahmadis are infidels).'[167]

10.2.5 In regard to the exclusion of Ahmadis in the newly established National Commission for Minorities (NCM), on 7 May 2020 Reuters reported receiving a text message from Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, Ali Muhammad Khan, which said 'If [Ahmadis] want to avail constitutional rights they must accept the constitution first.'[168] Khan also tweeted that beheading was the only punishment for those who insult the Prophet Mohammed[169] [170]. Referring to

[164] USSD, 'IRF Report 2020' (section II), 12 May 2021
[165] USSD, 'IRF Report 2019' (section II), 10 June 2020
[166] DFAT, 'Country Information Report Pakistan' (paragraph 3.133), 20 February 2019
[167] HRCP, 'Conspicuous By Its Absence' (page 8), June 2020
[168] Reuters, 'Pakistan excludes religious sect from minority commission', 7 May 2020
[169] UCA News, 'Pakistan minister calls for beheading of blasphemers', 30 April 2020
[170] Reuters, 'Pakistan excludes religious sect from minority commission', 7 May 2020

Khan's tweet, MRG stated it was clear from the context that he was referring to Ahmadis and inciting violence based on a person's faith[171]. Khan later deleted the tweet, apparently at the request of Twitter[172].

10.2.6 Reporting on the NCM on 18 May 2020, Voice of America (VoA) noted that Noor-ul-Haq Qadri, Pakistan's Federal Minister for Religious and Inter-faith Harmony Affairs, said during a televised interview with local SAMAA TV 'Whoever shows sympathy or compassion towards [Ahmadis] is neither loyal to Islam nor the state of Pakistan.'[173]

10.2.7 According to the US Commission for International Religious Freedom 2021 report (USCIRF Report 2021) covering 2020, 'The government did not address statements made by Qadri or other officials who incited hatred and intolerance towards Ahmadis and other religious minorities.'[174]

10.2.8 A press release dated 17 March 2021 by Pakistan's Standing Committee on Religious Affairs and Inter-Faith Harmony condemned the APPG's July 2020 report on the situation of Ahmadis and other religious minorities, 'Suffocation of the Faithful', and demanded the report be withdrawn as it was 'baseless, false and misleading.' The Standing Committee blamed a pro-Ahmadi group for stating that the Pakistan Government exploited religious minorities, and declared that Pakistan had always protected minority groups[175].

See also Societal treatment and attitudes: Hate speech and incitement of violence.

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10.3 Freedom of expression

10.3.1 Although it is not a crime to possess Ahmadi literature[176], the sale of such literature is banned[177].

10.3.2 The April 2017 IHRC/AHRC Report stated that anti-terror legislation was being used to ban and seize Ahmadi publications by declaring Ahmadi literature to be hate material under the National Action Plan (2014). The report noted that the legislation was aimed at stopping sectarian hatred against religious minorities but it was '… increasingly used by the State to ban Ahmadi literature and by extremist clerics to target Ahmadis.' According to the report 'This has profound implications and is more far reaching than the Blasphemy Laws as any Ahmadi can now be arrested without notice and without any recourse to bail. The penalty is a mandatory five-year sentence of imprisonment.'[178]

10.3.3 The APPG report cited the case of Abdul Shakoor ('Shakoor Bhai'), a bookshop owner in Rabwah, whose shop was raided in December 2015 by anti-terrorism police, where they seized Ahmadi-publications and arrested

[171] MRG, 'MRG concerned by anti-Ahmadiyya campaign online…', 1 May 2020
[172] Reuters, 'Pakistan excludes religious sect from minority commission', 7 May 2020
[173] VoA, 'Pakistani Ahmadi Leaders Fear Backlash After New Minority Commission…', 18 May 2020
[174] USCIRF, 'Annual Report 2021' (page 36), April 2021
[175] National Assembly Secretariat, 'Press Release', 17 March 2021
[176] USCIRF, 'Abdul Shakoor', no date
[177] USSD, 'IRF Report 2020' (section II), 12 May 2021
[178] IHRC/AHRC, 'Ahmadis in Pakistan Face an Existential Threat', (page 24), April 2017

Shakoor Bhai. In January 2016, Shakoor was sentenced to 8 years in prison and, aged 83, was released in March 2019 following his appeal, which took 3 years to be heard[179]. The APPG also noted, '[In December 2016] The police used the pretext of the publications ban, citing the same counter-terrorism measures, to raid the Community's headquarters in Chenab Nagar (Rabwah), where armed antiterror police seized books and computers of the Community's staff, despite having no warrant for entry or seizure of goods.'[180]

10.3.4 A note to CPIT from the IHRC, dated July 2021, noted that the Anti-Terrorism Act:

> '… is increasingly used by the State to ban Ahmadi literature and by extremist clerics to target Ahmadis. This has profound implications and is more far reaching than the Blasphemy Laws as any Ahmadi can now be arrested without notice and without any recourse to bail. The penalty is a mandatory five-year sentence of imprisonment. It is extremely concerning that Ahmadis are being profiled under this legislation. The National Plan of Action is the origin of the raid in the Rabwah, Chakwal attack and the arrest of Abdul Shakoor (elderly bookshop owner). Pakistan is using anti-terrorism laws as a pretext for denying Ahmadis their fundamental human right to religious freedom. The arrest and sentencing of Abdul Shakoor is yet another example of Pakistan's systematic and egregious violations of freedom of religion or belief.'[181]

10.3.5 DFAT noted in its Pakistan report of February 2019, that as of 2018 publication bans remained on the Ahmadiyya daily 'The Alfazl' and community periodicals 'Ansarullah', 'Misbah', 'Khalid', 'Tashheez' and 'Tahrik Jadid.'[182] Mirza Usman Ahmad, a Senior Official of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in Pakistan, told the APPG inquiry that all 86 books by the founder of the Ahmadi community had been banned, as well as Ahmadi websites[183].

See also Anti-terror laws.

10.3.6 As noted in the USSD IRF Report 2020, 'Under the 2016 Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA), the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony is responsible for reviewing internet traffic and reporting blasphemous or offensive content to the Pakistan Telecommunications Authority for possible removal or to the Federal Investigative Agency for possible criminal prosecution.'[184]

10.3.7 The report added:

> 'The government continued its warnings against blasphemy and other illegal content on social media through periodic print advertisements and text messages sent by the Pakistan Telecommunications Authority (PTA). The text messages stated, "Sharing of blasphemy, pornography, terrorism, and other unlawful content on social media and the internet is illegal. Users are

179 APPG, 'Suffocation of the faithful' (pages 46 to 47), July 2020
180 APPG, 'Suffocation of the faithful' (page 48), July 2020
181 IHRC, 'Note to CPIT' (paragraph 2.2), July 2021
182 DFAT, 'Country Information Report Pakistan' (paragraph 3.123), 20 February 2019
183 APPG, 'Suffocation of the faithful' (page 46), July 2020
184 USSD, 'IRF Report 2020' (section II), 12 May 2021

advised to report such content on content-complaint@pta.gov.pk for action under PECA 16 (the 2016 PECA act)”.’[185]

10.3.8 The July 2020 APPG report published a copy of a letter issued by the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA), dated 28 May 2020, which referred to the illegal airing of Ahmadi Muslim TV channels and ordered its regional offices to remain vigilant and ensure such broadcasts did not occur[186].

10.3.9 The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) issued a press release on 25 December 2020, which noted it had issued Notices to Google Inc. and Wikipedia to remove ‘sacrilegious’ content. The PTA said it had received complaints regarding ‘misleading search results associated with “Present Khalifa of Islam” and unauthentic version of Holy Quran uploaded by Ahmadiyya Community on Google Play Store… Complaints were also received regarding hosting of caricatures of Holy Prophet (PBUH) and dissemination of misleading, wrong, deceptive and deceitful information through articles published on Wikipedia portraying Mirza Masroor Ahmad as a Muslim.’[187]

10.3.10 Responding to the PTA notice to Google and Wikipedia, the IHRC stated in a press release dated 24 January 2021 that:

> ‘The Pakistan Government is (1) requiring Wikipedia to remove articles portraying the worldwide head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, His Holiness Mirza Masroor Ahmad, as a Muslim; and (2) requiring Google to remove a Google play app published by the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, which provides Arabic and English translations of the Qur’an, and (3) requiring Google to change their algorithm for the search queries “Khalifa of Islam” and “Caliph of Islam”. PTA has threatened penalties and prosecution for non-compliance.’[188]

10.3.11 Another press release by the PTA, dated 22 January 2021, noted that it had blocked viewers in Pakistan from accessing the US-based Ahmadi community website www.trueislam.com, which provides general information about Ahmadi history, beliefs and the US-based Ahmadi community[189] [190]. The PTA stated it had approached the administrator of the website and ordered the removal of unlawful online content because it violated the constitution and sections 295-A, 298-B and 298-C of Pakistan Penal Code (PPC)[191].

10.3.12 In a note to CPIT dated July 2021, the IHRC indicated ‘In the past few weeks, the PTA has issued takedown notices to the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in Australia, Canada and the UK.’[192] CPIT was unable to find

[185] USSD, ‘IRF Report 2020’ (section II), 12 May 2021
[186] APPG, ‘Suffocation of the faithful’ (page 60), July 2020
[187] PTA, ‘PTA Issues Notices To Google & Wikipedia For Disseminating,,,’, 25 December 2020
[188] IHRC, ‘Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) Issue Order…’, 24 January 2021
[189] PTA, ‘“Trueislam.Com” Blocked In Pakistan’, 22 January 2021
[190] ICJ, ‘Pakistan: Persecution of Ahmadis must end as authorities attempt…’, 3 February 2021
[191] PTA, ‘“Trueislam.Com” Blocked In Pakistan’, 22 January 2021
[192] IHRC, ‘Note to CPIT’ (paragraph 1.3), July 2021

corroborating information in the sources consulted for this note (see Bibliography).

10.3.13 Referring to the PTA's attempts to use the PECA 2016 to countries outside its jurisdiction the IHRC note of July 2021 stated that the cyber laws were being used to target minorities, adding 'The Pakistani government must end its policing of Ahmadis outside the country… Policing Ahmadis digitally on what they can or cannot preach, no matter where they are, is a violation of Pakistan's legal obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights to which the country is a state party.'[193]

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10.4 Application of the blasphemy laws

10.4.1 Although the majority of those accused and convicted of blasphemy were Muslim[194], religious minorities continued to be disproportionately affected[195].

10.4.2 In July 2021, the IHRC stated in a note to CPIT:

> 'Blasphemy legislation is implemented at political, economic, social, and educational level affecting Ahmadis from all sectors of society and of all ages. This repressive legislation and state-endorsed compliance has had traumatic consequences for all Ahmadis as they continue to live in fear of daily persecution by the state, the judiciary, the police, religious vigilantes, media, and the general public, thus effectively denying them their most basic fundamental entitlements of religious freedom and human rights.'[196]

10.4.3 The author of the study on Ahmadi women, published by CREID in November 2020, cited information based on a report published in February 2020 on the website Persecutionofahmadis.org. This report and website is no longer accessible. The information provided in the CREID report noted:

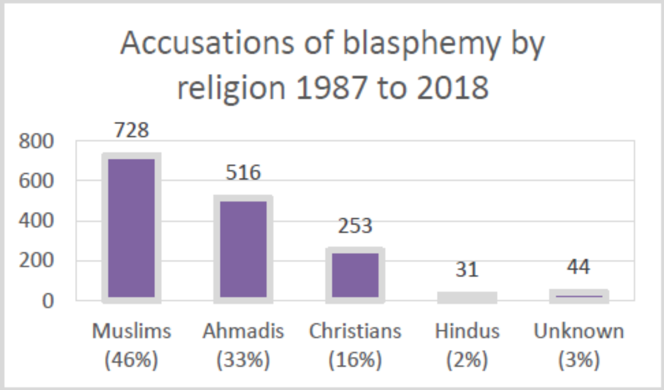
> 'Statistics from 1984 to 2019 reported by the AMC [Ahmadi Muslim Community] in its annual report (TPA 2019) confirm an upward trend of AM [Ahmadi] persecution during the current Government of Pakistan… Statistics of police cases registered against Ahmadis on religious grounds show that 765 Ahmadis were booked for displaying Kalima [the formal content of declaration of the Islamic faith], 38 Ahmadis were arrested for making the Islamic call to prayer (azan), 453 Ahmadis were arrested for "posing" as Muslims, 161 Ahmadis were booked for using Islamic epithets, 93 Ahmadis were charged for saying namaz (a mandatory prayer which Muslims offer five times a day), 825 Ahmadis were booked for preaching, 49 Ahmadis were booked for allegedly defiling the Holy Qur'an, 1,222 Ahmadis were charged in other religious cases, and 315 Ahmadis were charged under the "blasphemy law", i.e. PPC 295-C.'[197]

10.4.4 According to data examined by the Centre for Social Justice (CSJ), a Pakistani NGO advocating human rights, 1,572 people were accused of

[193] IHRC, 'Note to CPIT' (paragraphs 1.4 to 1.6), July 2021
[194] USSD, 'IRF Report 2019' (section II), 10 June 2020
[195] USSD, 'IRF Report 2020' (section II), 12 May 2021
[196] IHRC, 'Note to CPIT' (paragraph 3.6), July 2021
[197] CREID, 'Violence and Discrimination against Women…' (pages 221 to 222), November 2020

committing blasphemy between 1987 and 2018[198]. Figure 2 depicts the breakdown of these accusations by religious denomination, as recorded by the CSJ in its December 2019 report[199]:

Figure 2



10.4.5 Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) cited comparable figures for the same period in a report dated September 2019, 'The National Commission for Justice and Peace (NCJP), a human rights organisation based in Pakistan, found that a total of 776 Muslims, 505 Ahmadis, 229 Christians and 30 Hindus were accused under the blasphemy laws between 1987 and 2018.'[200]

10.4.6 According to a BBC News article dated May 2019, which referred to the NCJP figures, 'The vast majority of these cases were lodged for desecration of the Koran – far fewer for blasphemy against the Prophet Muhammad.'[201]

10.4.7 The CSJ and CSW reports did not indicate how many of the blasphemy accusations and charges recorded resulted in convictions, while the USSD IRF Report 2019 noted 'According to data compiled from multiple sources, since 2001 there were 28 convictions of non-Ahmadi Muslims, 16 convictions of Christians, and four convictions of Ahmadi Muslims.'[202]

10.4.8 The USSD IRF Report 2020 noted that NGOs reported an increase in blasphemy charges in 2020 – at least 199 persons were charged, the highest number of cases seen in a single year, according to the Center for Social Justice (CSJ). Of those, 20% of cases were against Ahmadis[203].

10.4.9 According to the IHRC's note to CPIT, dated July 2021, 'In the past year alone, at least 24 criminal cases were registered against members of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in Pakistan on religious grounds, including a jeweller who was charged for having sacrificed a cow and then distributing the meat.'[204]

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[198] CSJ, 'Challenges in Exercising Religious Freedom in Pakistan' (page 29), December 2019
[199] CSJ, 'Challenges in Exercising Religious Freedom in Pakistan' (page 29), December 2019
[200] CSW, 'Long read: … Pakistan's blasphemy laws', 18 September 2019
[201] BBC News, 'What are Pakistan's blasphemy laws?', 8 May 2019
[202] USSD, 'IRF Report 2019' (section II), 10 June 2020
[203] USSD, 'IRF Report 2020' (section II), 12 May 2021
[204] IHRC, 'Note to CPIT' (paragraph 1.3), July 2021

10.4.10 The CSJ noted in regard to its findings for the period between 1987 and 2018:

> 'Although the highest number of the accused (46.3%) is from the Muslim faith, the statistics show that the majority (51.9%) of those charged under the law are from minority religious faiths. The proportion seems particularly high when it is considered that 51.9% of the accused are from minority communities that form less than 4% of the national population. Over this period, the highest number of individuals accused of blasphemy was reported from Punjab (1,156), followed by Sindh (335), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (39), Islamabad (21), Balochistan (9) and Gilgit Baltistan (6).'[205]

10.4.11 In regard to imprisonment for blasphemy the USSD IRF Report 2019 stated that during that year, civil society reports noted there were at least 84 persons imprisoned on blasphemy charges, of which 31 were Christian, 16 Ahmadi, and 5 Hindu[206]. At least 35 persons were serving death sentences for blasphemy in 2020[207].

10.4.12 According to a 2015 report by the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), over 80% of blasphemy cases were overturned on appeal, '… with judges expressly stating in a large majority of such cases that the complaint was fabricated and spurred on by personal vendettas.'[208] The DFAT report indicated that around 95% of cases were acquitted[209], though often only after lengthy periods of detention[210] [211]. The USSD IRF Reports for 2019 and 2020 reported some blasphemy convictions were overturned during those years[212] [213].

10.4.13 The Austrian Centre for Country of Origin & Asylum Research and Documentation (ACCORD) March 2021 report on Pakistan religious minorities, based on a range of sources, cited a December 2020 report by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which in turn cited the now unavailable report published on Persecutionofahmadis.org. According to the data, between January 1984 and 1 December 2019, 40 Ahmadi mosques were closed or sealed by the government and the construction of 59 Ahmadi mosques was stopped by the government[214].

10.4.14 Although death sentences continued to be passed for blasphemy, the authorities have never executed anyone for this offence[215] [216].

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205 CSJ, 'Challenges in Exercising Religious Freedom in Pakistan' (page 29), December 2019
206 USSD, 'IRF Report 2019' (section II), 10 June 2020
207 USSD, 'IRF Report 2020' (section II), 12 May 2021
208 ICJ, 'On Trial: The Implementation of Pakistan's Blasphemy Laws' (page 7), November 2015
209 DFAT, 'Country Information Report Pakistan' (paragraph 3.87), 20 February 2019
210 DFAT, 'Country Information Report Pakistan' (paragraph 3.87), 20 February 2019
211 HRCP, 'HRCP alarmed by surge in blasphemy cases against Shia community', 5 September 2020
212 USSD, 'IRF Report 2019' (section II), 10 June 2020
213 USSD, 'IRF Report 2020' (section II), 12 May 2021
214 ACCORD, 'Pakistan: Religious Minorities' (page 63), March 2021
215 USCIRF, 'Annual Report 2021' (page 37), April 2021
216 USSD, 'IRF Report 2020' (section II), 12 May 2021

10.5 Police and judicial protection

10.5.1 The USSD IRF Report 2020 stated that, 'NGOs expressed concern that authorities often failed to intervene in instances of societal violence against religious minorities due to fear of retaliation, inadequate staff, or apathy. Perpetrators of societal violence and abuses against religious minorities often faced no legal consequences due to a lack of follow-through by law enforcement, bribes offered by the accused, and pressure on victims to drop cases.'[217]

10.5.2 The official at the AMA UK stated that Ahmadis were hesitant to report incidents to the police due to fear of recriminations. He explained that there may be situations, for example, if you were badly injured, where you would have to make a report. However, even serious incidents, including deaths, may not be reported as the police did not always record a First Information Report (FIR) due to pressure placed on them by some clerics[218].

10.5.3 According to a HRW article of May 2020 'In several instances, the police have been complicit in harassment and filing of false charges against Ahmadis, or stood by in the face of anti-Ahmadi violence.'[219]

10.5.4 The USSD IRF Report 2020 noted 'Civil society members reported authorities took no action to prevent attacks on Ahmadi mosques or punish assailants who demolished, damaged, forcibly occupied, or set fire to Ahmadi mosques. Local authorities did not allow the repair or unsealing of Ahmadi mosques damaged or demolished by rioters in previous years.'[220]

10.5.5 Reporting on events in 2019, the USSD IRF Report 2019 noted:

> 'According to the Ahmadiyya community spokesperson, on October 25 Assistant Commissioner of Hasilpur, Punjab, Mohammad Tayyab, led a group of police officers and other officials, who tore down part of an Ahmadi mosque. Throughout the year, police closed down two Ahmadi prayer centers in Rawalpindi, citing law and order concerns, and another prayer center in Lahore. In June police in Sheikhapura District, Punjab Province, denied Ahmadis access to a mosque they used for prayer and forced them to sign a declaration they would no longer pray in the mosque. In September police also prevented Ahmadis from praying in a private home in Gujranwala, Punjab Province, and in a newly-built prayer center in Nankana, also in Punjab. In all these cases, Ahmadiyya Muslim community leaders cited complaints from Muslim clerics as prompting police to prevent their worship.'[221]

10.5.6 As noted in a March 2020 article in The Diplomat, 'Ahmadiyya places of worships remained under attack. On February 6, 2020, a group of people stormed and forcibly occupied a 100-year-old Ahmadiyya mosque in Kasur,

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[217] USSD, 'IRF Report 2020' (section II), 12 May 2021
[218] AMA UK, 'Note of CPIT meeting', 26 March 2015
[219] HRW, 'Pakistan: Ahmadis Kept Off Minorities Commission', 8 May 2020
[220] USSD, 'IRF Report 2020' (section II), 12 May 2021
[221] USSD, 'IRF Report 2019' (section II), 10 June 2020

Punjab. Succumbing to pressure, the local authorities deprived Ahmadis and handed the mosque over to hardliners.'[222]

10.5.7 In March 2021, the Rabwah Times reported on an incident that occurred on the outskirts of Gujranwala, Punjab province, whereby police demolished minarets of an Ahmadi mosque after a complaint, lodged in January 2021 by a local Muslim, that the Islamic inscription on the Mosque hurt their feelings. The report also noted that the complainant alleged an Ahmadi school was running illegally, so police shut it down for not having a registration certificate[223].

10.5.8 A joint statement on targeted violence against Ahmadis, by Amnesty International (AI), Human Rights Watch (HRW), and the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), dated November 2020, said 'Since July 2020, there have been at least five apparently targeted killings of members of the Ahmadiyya community. In only two of the cases have the police taken a suspect into custody. Pakistani authorities have long downplayed, and at times even encouraged, violence against Ahmadis…'[224] The article cited Omar Waraich, head of South Asia at Amnesty International, as saying "The recent wave of killings tragically underscores not just the seriousness of the threats they face, but also the callous indifference of the authorities, who have failed to protect the community or punish the perpetrators".'[225]

See Attacks against Ahmadis.

10.5.9 The AI, HRW and ICJ statement also noted:

> 'The authorities arbitrarily arrest, detain, and charge Ahmadis for blasphemy and other offenses because of their religious beliefs. The police have often been complicit in harassment and bringing fabricated charges against Ahmadis or have not intervened to stop anti-Ahmadi violence. The government's failure to address religious persecution of Ahmadis has facilitated violence against them in the name of religion.'[226]

10.5.10 In cases of blasphemy accusations, the USSD IRF Report 2020 said 'While the law requires a senior police official to investigate any blasphemy charge before a complaint may be filed, a requirement that NGOs and legal observers stated helped contribute to an objective investigation and the dismissal of many blasphemy cases, some NGOs said police did not uniformly follow this procedure.'[227]

10.5.11 Furthermore, the same report noted in regard to the handling of blasphemy cases by the courts:

> 'NGOs, legal observers and religious minority representatives continued to raise concerns regarding the failure of lower courts to adhere to basic evidentiary standards in blasphemy cases, and the slow pace of adjudicating these cases, which led to some suspects remaining in detention for years as

[222] The Diplomat, 'Religious Minorities in "Naya Pakistan"', 16 March 2020
[223] Rabwah Times, 'Pakistan police demolish minarets of Ahmadi Mosque', 22 March 2021
[224] AI, HRW and ICJ, 'Pakistan: Surge in Targeted Killings of Ahmadis', 26 November 2020.
[225] AI, HRW and ICJ, 'Pakistan: Surge in Targeted Killings of Ahmadis', 26 November 2020.
[226] AI, HRW and ICJ, 'Pakistan: Surge in Targeted Killings of Ahmadis', 26 November 2020.
[227] USSD, 'IRF Report 2020' (section II), 12 May 2021

they waited their initial trial or appeals, and to some convicted persons spending years in prison before higher courts overturned their convictions and freed them for lack of evidence. According to legal advocacy groups, some lower courts continued to conduct proceedings in an intimidating atmosphere, with members of antiblasphemy groups, such as the Tehreek-i-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP), often threatening the defendants' attorneys, family members, and supporters. At other times, advocacy groups reported that blasphemy trials were held inside jails for security reasons, in which case the hearings were not public, resulting in a gain in immediate security but a loss of transparency. These observers said the general refusal of lower courts to hold timely hearings or acquit those accused persisted due to fear of reprisal and vigilantism. Legal observers also reported judges and magistrates often delayed or continued trials indefinitely to avoid confrontation with, or violence from, groups provoking protests.'[228]

10.5.12 The USSD IRF Report 2020 noted that the day after the murder of an Ahmadi man in rural Punjab on 20 November 2020:

'… Human Rights Minister Shireen Mazari posted a tweet calling for the government to protect all its citizens. Ahmadiyya community members said they were surprised by this instance of a senior government official condemning anti-Ahmadi violence, but added that they do not expect it to become the new norm. The special assistant to the Prime Minister for religious harmony, Tahir Ashrafi, said it was "the responsibility of the government and court to punish" the perpetrator in a televised interview.'[229]

10.5.13 In its July 2021 note to CPIT, the IHRC opined:

'Law enforcement agencies are frequently unsympathetic and unwilling and often unable to provide protection to Ahmadis due to pressure from orthodox clerics and mob violence. The Judiciary is intimidated and placed under pressure by clerics and lawyers who share fundamentalist ideologies… The absence of the necessary political will (largely due to fear of reprisal from but at times also due to sympathies with orthodox clerics) prevents any progress in improving the Human Rights violations against Ahmadis through law reforms or provision of the necessary backing and resources.'[230]

See also Societal treatment and attitudes and Application of the blasphemy laws.

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Section 11 updated: 24 August 2021

11. Societal treatment and attitudes

11.1 Hate speech and incitement of violence

11.1.1 The USSD IRF Report 2019 noted:

'Ministry of Human Rights officials stated the government ordered PEMRA [Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority] to monitor television

[228] USSD, 'IRF Report 2020' (section II), 12 May 2021
[229] USSD, 'IRF Report 2020' (section II), 12 May 2021
[230] IHRC, 'Note to CPIT' (paragraphs 3.7 and 3.17), July 2021

broadcasts and take action against any broadcaster airing hate speech against Ahmadis. Ahmadiyya Muslim community representatives stated that the Urdu-language press frequently printed hate speech in news stories and op-eds, estimating nearly 3,000 instances of hate speech were printed during the year, some of which could be considered inciting anti-Ahmadi violence. Inflammatory anti-Ahmadi rhetoric continued to exist on social media.'[231]

11.1.2 As noted in the USSD IRF Report 2020, 'Print and broadcast media outlets continued to publish and broadcast anti-Ahmadi rhetoric.'[232] The same source noted that 'According to Ahmadi Muslim civil society organizations, the government failed to restrict advertisements or speeches inciting anti-Ahmadi violence, as provided for in the National Action Plan. Civil society groups continued to express concerns about the safety of religious minorities.'[233]

11.1.3 The HRCP noted in its June 2020 report on religious freedom, '… the Ahmadiyya community is frequently targeted in the mainstream media by the Muslim majority – often involving those holding public offices – without any fear of consequences.'[234] In March 2020 The Diplomat reported, 'The authorities were unable to stop the rising hatred against the community even on digital platforms. On July 19 2019, an anti-Ahmadiyya hashtag (#قادیانی_دنیاکابدترین_کافر or "Qadiani [a derogatory word for Ahmadis] is the worst infidel in the world") was trending on Twitter.'[235] In April 2020 The Diplomat cited another anti-Ahmadi hashtag, trending in Pakistan on 13 April 2020: '#ردِ_قادیانیت_ایمانی_فریضہ (meaning "religious obligation to reject Ahmadiyya belief"), targeted the Ahmadiyya community and called their faith "heretic".'[236]

11.1.4 CREID identified a rise in online hate speech against Ahmadis during April and May 2020, which coincided with an anti-Ahmadi statements made by government officials. CREID noted that 'On social media, Ahmadis are commonly labeled as infidels (kafir) who should be killed (Wajib-ul-Qatal).'[237]

See also State treatment and attitudes: Anti-Ahmadi rhetoric.

11.1.5 The USSD IRF Report 2020 noted 'Throughout the year, Islamic organizations with varying degrees of political affiliation held conferences and rallies to support the doctrine of Khatm-e-Nabuwat. The events were often covered by English and local-language media and featured anti-Ahmadiyya rhetoric which Ahmadiyya community representatives said could incite violence against Ahmadis.'[238]

11.1.6 The July 2020 APPG report explained Khatme-Nabuwat:

'This inquiry noted that one of the main organisations that has been at the forefront of the anti-Ahmadi hatred and violence is Khatme Nabuwwat. It was

[231] USSD, 'IRF Report 2019' (section II), 10 June 2020
[232] USSD, 'IRF Report 2020' (section II), 12 May 2021
[233] USSD, 'IRF Report 2020' (Executive summary), 12 May 2021
[234] HRCP, 'Conspicuous By Its Absence' (page 4), June 2020
[235] The Diplomat, 'Religious Minorities in "Naya Pakistan"', 16 March 2020
[236] The Diplomat, 'COVID-19 Fans Religious Discrimination in Pakistan', 28 April 2020
[237] CREID, 'Hate speech monitoring helps raise alarm for Ahmadis in Pakistan', 17 September 2020
[238] USSD, 'IRF Report 2020' (section III), 12 May 2021

founded to explicitly target the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community to eradicate it from Pakistan. It promotes the view that Ahmadis should be given the death sentence if they do not leave their faith. It is named after its claim to promote the concept of "Finality of Prophethood" which it takes to mean that no prophet can appear after the Holy Prophet of Islam, even if such a prophet claimed to revive the teachings of Islam. The organisation is also known by other names in Pakistan including Majlise Tahaffuz Khatme Nabuwwat (meaning "The Group for the Protection of the Finality of Prophethood") and Alami Majlis Tahaffuz Khatme Nabuwwat (meaning "The International Group for the Protection of the Finality of Prophethood"). While these names in Pakistan may seem harmless, the disturbing fact is that this organisation seeks to enforce its ideology through violence and hate.'[239]

11.1.7 The report added 'It has been courted by politicians over decades due to its street power to rouse mobs. It has also led many campaigns against the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community through rallies, adverts, call for boycotts and it routinely preaches the call for Ahmadis to be killed, having labelled them Wajib-ul-Qatl (liable to be killed).'[240]

11.1.8 The July 2020 APPG report noted that:

'Since 1984, Ahmadis have been banned from congregating for religious purposes. This applies to all activities including their annual convention – Jalsa Salana – a religious gathering that promotes Islamic principles of peace, providing religious guidance for Ahmadis and offering an opportunity for collective prayers. However, as a result of the laws, the last Jalsa was held 37 years ago in 1983. By contrast, no action has been taken to stop numerous anti-Ahmadi rallies inciting hate and violence from being held across Pakistan, including in Rabwah – the national headquarters of the community.'[241]

11.1.9 The APPG were also told by Ahmadi spokesperson, Mr Saleem ud Din, that the Khatme-Nabuwat '… organises large scale, abusive and often violent protests in the streets of Rabwah. Ahmadis have no choice but to seek cover for protection. Many rallies go on for hours and Ahmadis fear for their lives. Properties and livelihoods are destroyed in the process. Shockingly, High Court judges too are promoters of this group with further members of the judiciary also openly in support of them.'[242]

11.1.10 According to Saleem ud Din:

'The Government has also given large areas of Ahmadi owned land in Rabwah to anti-Ahmadi groups, Khatme Nabuwwat and Majlis-e-Ahrar. They have been placed in Rabwah (taking over some of the community's mosques in the process) with the objective of disrupting Ahmadi lives as much as possible. Even when burials are taking place at the Ahmadi cemetery extremist clerics from Khatme Nabuwwat often start hurling verbal abuse and use derogatory language. Majlis-eAhrar has taken over the

[239] APPG, 'Suffocation of the faithful' (page 61), July 2020
[240] APPG, 'Suffocation of the faithful' (page 61), July 2020
[241] APPG, 'Suffocation of the faithful' (page 41), July 2020
[242] APPG, 'Suffocation of the faithful' (page 62), July 2020

“Muslim Colony Area” in Rabwah and hold annual protest marches where its followers arrive from all over the country to parade, loot and cause substantial damage to Ahmadi owned property as well as shouting verbal abuse at residents. The Community has to remain vigilant and is required to evacuate households during these violent protests.’[243]

11.1.11 Anti-Ahmadi banners, posters and stickers were said to be prevalent across Pakistan, displayed in public places such as bus terminals, railway stations, markets, grocery stores, cloth shops, bookstores and restaurants. Some shops displayed signs telling Ahmadis to keep out, for example, ‘Qadianis [a derogatory term for Ahmadis] keep out’ or ‘Qadianis should first enter Islam, and then my shop’, as well as warnings against buying Ahmadi-made products[244] [245] [246].

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11.2 Discrimination and harassment

11.2.1 The USSD IRF Report 2020 noted that Ahmadis reported ‘… widespread societal harassment and discrimination against community members, including physical attacks, destruction of homes and personal property, and threats intended to force Ahmadis to abandon their jobs or towns.’[247]

11.2.2 In its Annual Report for 2020, Amnesty International stated in regard to the COVID-19 pandemic ‘Amid the economic impact of the pandemic, there was a surge in charity drives to help support those who had lost their livelihoods. Despite this, members of the persecuted Ahmadiyya community were reportedly denied alms and donations on account of their faith. Calls were circulated on social media by religious organizations asking charities to ensure that Ahmadis did not receive food supplies or other essentials.’[248]

11.2.3 As noted in the February 2019 DFAT report:

> ‘Ahmadis report they feel safest in Rabwah, although an Ahmadi who had drawn adverse official or societal attention would not be safe there. Ahmadis face the highest risk of discrimination and violence in rural villages where no extended Ahmadi community exists, although the security of individuals largely depends on the attitude of the local cleric. Ahmadis report the highest levels of discrimination in rural areas in Punjab. After Punjab, Ahmadis consider Karachi to be the most dangerous location.’[249]

11.2.4 Speaking in March 2015 the UK-based Ahmadi member said that although a person does not have to officially declare their religion when renting a property, some people don’t like to rent houses to Ahmadis. He said he was once asked to leave a place when the landlord was made aware that he was an Ahmadi[250].

[243] APPG, ‘Suffocation of the faithful’ (page 69), July 2020
[244] APPG, ‘Suffocation of the faithful’ (page 62), July 2020
[245] CREID, ‘Violence and Discrimination against Women…’ (page 276), November 2020
[246] Qantara, ‘Pakistan's “Commission for Minorities” without the Ahmadis’, 10 July 2020
[247] USSD, ‘IRF Report 2020’ (section III), 12 May 2021
[248] Amnesty International, ‘Pakistan 2020’ (Discrimination), 7 April 2021
[249] DFAT, ‘Country Information Report Pakistan’ (paragraph 3.134), 20 February 2019
[250] AMA UK, ‘Note of CPIT meeting’, 26 March 2015

11.2.5 The CREID study also noted, in regard to renting property outside of Rabwah, 'Non-Ahmadis do not rent their houses to Ahmadis. They consider AMs as "achhut" (word used for the lowest class in India) and infidel. The participants' perception was that other non-Muslim communities also avoid AMs because of the fear of violence from Muslim communities.'[251]

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11.3 Attacks against Ahmadis

11.3.1 The USSD 2020 report on human rights practices in Pakistan (USSD HR Report 2020) noted 'Societal violence due to religious intolerance remained a serious problem. There were occasionally reports of mob violence against religious minorities, including Christians, Ahmadi Muslims, and Hindus.'[252] The July 2020 APPG report indicated that '… vigilante culture in Pakistan is deeply entrenched, with clerics giving mobs the religious legitimisation to carry out acts of violence against minority religious communities.'[253]

11.3.2 In its February 2019 report, DFAT noted that 'Violence against Ahmadis by militant groups has been relatively rare in recent years. This partly reflects a general improvement in the security situation, the relatively high socio-economic status of many Ahmadis, and the difficulty of identifying Ahmadi solely from their appearance. Nonetheless, violent attacks on Ahmadis can and do occur.'[254]

11.3.3 The March 2021 ACCORD report recited data published by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs in December 2020, taken from a February 2020 report on the Persecutionofahmadis.org website, which is no longer accessible, 'According to the data, 29 Ahmadi mosques were destroyed between 1984 and 1 December 2019, 25 mosques set on fire or damaged and 17 illegally occupied.'[255]

11.3.4 The author of the report published by CREID in November 2020 also provided information based on the report published on the website Persecutionofahmadis.org, which indicated that between 1984 and 1 December 2019:

> '… 265 Ahmadis were killed, 393 were assaulted for their faith, there were 70 instances of Ahmadis denied burial in a common cemetery, 39 Ahmadi bodies were exhumed, and there were 44 incidents of removing Kalima (the formal content of declaration of the Islamic faith) from Ahmadi homes and shops and on 103 occasions Kalima were removed from Ahmadi mosques.'[256]

11.3.5 The July 2020 APPG report noted that 269 Ahmadi Muslims have been killed on account of their faith between 1984 and July 2020[257]. This figure included

[251] CREID, 'Violence and Discrimination against Women…' (page 281), November 2020
[252] USSD, 'HR Report 2020' (section 6), 30 March 2021
[253] APPG, 'Suffocation of the faithful' (page 51), July 2020
[254] DFAT, 'Country Information Report Pakistan' (paragraph 3.129), 20 February 2019
[255] ACCORD, 'Pakistan: Religious Minorities' (page 65), March 2021
[256] CREID, 'Violence and Discrimination against Women…' (page 221), November 2020
[257] APPG, 'Suffocation of the faithful' (page 25), July 2020

the deaths of 86 Ahmadis, who were killed when 2 Ahmadi mosques in Lahore were attacked by the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) on 28 May 2010[258] [259].

11.3.6 According to the think tank Center for Research and Security Studies (CRSS) report covering 2013 to 2018, 24 Ahmadis were killed during that period, in what it described as sectarian violence[260]. According to data collected by the South Asia Terrorism Portal (SATP) between 2000 and 2020, there were 31 attacks against Ahmadis resulting in 138 deaths and 128 injuries[261].

11.3.7 In its annual report for 2019, CRSS noted that 2 Ahmadis were killed in Punjab[262], whilst the USSD IRF Report 2019 noted that unidentified individuals killed 3 Ahmadis in 2019 in attacks which were believed to be religiously motivated[263].

11.3.8 In 2020, the CRSS reported that 4 Ahmadis were killed (3 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and 1 in Punjab) and 3 were injured[264]. Reporting in November 2020, a joint statement by Amnesty International (AI), Human Rights Watch (HRW), and the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) noted 'Since July 2020, there have been at least five apparently targeted killings of members of the Ahmadiyya community.'[265]

11.3.9 A joint report by the non-governmental think tank Pak Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS) and the German political foundation Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) stated in its December 2020 report, based on a range of primary and secondary sources, that Ahmadis were frequent victims of targeted attacks:

> 'Ahmadi believed that in recent months they have been the target of an organized hate campaign in Peshawar and there had been an increase in faith-based attacks on Ahmadis. A spate of recent attacks against Ahmadis in Peshawar – usually drive-by shooting carried out by unidentified motorcycle riders – caused the death of an Ahmadi professor on October 5 [2020], and of an Ahmadi trader in a busy market of the city on August 12. On July 29, an elderly Ahmadi man, who was standing trial on blasphemy charges, was shot and killed inside a courtroom in Peshawar. A lawyer was said to have provided the murder weapon to the killer. On November 9, 2020, gunmen shot and killed an 82-year-old Ahmadi man on the outskirts of Peshawar.'[266]

11.3.10 The USSD IRF Report 2020 also noted the series of Ahmadi killings in Peshawar, which followed the death of US citizen Tahir Naseem in July 2020, who was shot in a Peshawar courtroom whilst on trial for blasphemy[267]. The

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[258] HRW, 'Pakistan: Massacre of Minority Ahmadis', 1 June 2010
[259] APPG, 'Suffocation of the faithful' (page 27), July 2020
[260] CRSS, 'Annual Security Report Special Edition 2013-2018' (page 58), 1 March 2019
[261] SATP, 'Attacks on Ahmadis', no date
[262] CRSS, 'Annual Security Report 2019' (page 31), 27 January 2020
[263] USSD, 'IRF Report 2019' (section III), 10 June 2020
[264] CRSS, 'Annual Security Report 2020' (pages 28 and 30), 10 February 2021
[265] AI, HRW and ICJ, 'Pakistan: Surge in Targeted Killings of Ahmadis', 26 November 2020.
[266] PIPS/FES, 'Strengthening Governance in Pakistan…' (pages 47 to 48), December 2020
[267] USSD, 'IRF Report 2020' (section III), 12 May 2021

same report also cited the death of an Ahmadi doctor, who was killed in rural Punjab whilst 3 of his family members were seriously injured in the attack[268].

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Section 12 updated: 24 August 2021

12. Discrimination in education and employment

12.1 Education

12.1.1 The USSD IRF Report 2020 noted:

> 'The constitution prohibits discriminatory admission based on religious affiliation to any governmental educational institution. According to regulations, the only factors affecting admission to government schools are students' grades and home provinces, although students must declare their religious affiliation on application forms. This declaration is also required for private educational institutions, including universities. Students who identify themselves as Muslims must declare in writing they believe Mohammed is the final prophet. Non-Muslims are required to have the head of their local religious communities verify their religious affiliation.'[269]

12.1.2 The DFAT report stated 'Ahmadi students have to register as Muslim or non-Muslim for their high school examinations. In Rabwah, students can elect to register with the Aga Khan Examination Board instead, which does not require a declaration of religion. Ahmadis in government schools and in other cities do not have this option… Non-Ahmadi parents discriminate against Ahmadi teachers and pupils in schools.'[270]

12.1.3 According to the same source:

> 'Minority religious leaders stated members of their communities continued to experience discrimination in admission to colleges and universities. Ahmadi representatives said the wording of the declaration students were required to sign on their applications for admission to universities continued to prevent Ahmadis from declaring themselves as Muslims. Their refusal to sign the statement meant they were automatically disqualified from fulfilling the admissions requirements. The government said Ahmadis could qualify for admission if they did not claim to be Muslims.'[271]

12.1.4 The study on poor Ahmadi women published by CREID in November 2020 noted with regard to admission to educational institutions:

> 'Poor AM [Ahmadi] women face many problems while seeking admission to government schools, colleges, and universities in Pakistan, and problems continue after they have been admitted. Local schools deny admission due to pressures from local clerics. Some schools offer admission but do not take any responsibility for the safety and rights of Ahmadi students at their institutes. Ahmadi students face hatred, insults, and torture from teachers and fellow students. Teachers discriminate them from non-Ahmadi students.

[268] USSD, 'IRF Report 2020' (section III), 12 May 2021
[269] USSD, 'IRF Report 2020' (section II), 12 May 2021
[270] DFAT, 'Country Information Report Pakistan' (paragraphs 3.130 and 3.131), 20 February 2019
[271] USSD, 'IRF Report 2020' (section II), 12 May 2021

‘Asif [a respondent in the study] explained how difficult it is for Ahmadis to apply for admission via an online registration form, which was introduced in 2009. This form requires applicants to mention their religious identity by choosing between “Muslim” and “non-Muslim”. This is a complicated situation for Ahmadi applicants as they believe themselves to be Muslims. Contrarily, the Pakistan constitution declares Ahmadis as non-Muslims. In cases where an Ahmadi selects the option “Islam”, he/she can be charged for a criminal offence under the blasphemy laws. This kind of form is designed to force Ahmadis to declare themselves as non-Muslims. In the past, educational institutes in Rabwah placed Ahmadis in the “Muslim” category. Since the introduction of the oppressive online registration system, institutes in Rabwah affiliated with the Agha Khan University Board, which does not require applicants to state their religious identity. However, institutes outside of Rabwah that are not affiliated with the Agha Khan University Board create serious problems for thousands of AMs just due to their faith. Their refusal to sign the declaration leads to their automatic disqualification for not fulfilling the admission requirements.’[272]

12.1.5 The USSD IRF Report 2019 referred to anti-Ahmadi rhetoric in educational settings:

‘Ahmadiyya community representatives said local associations of clerics frequently distributed anti-Ahmadi stickers to school districts to place on textbooks, and the school boards usually accepted them. These stickers contained phrases such as, “It is strictly prohibited in Sharia to speak to or do any business with Qadianis,” “The first sign of love of the Prophet is total boycott of Qadianis,” and “If your teacher is a Qadiani, refuse learning from him”.’[273]

12.1.6 According to the July 2020 APPG report, ‘Young Ahmadi Muslims face a constant risk of being denied access to education and those who secure a place are routinely targeted and stigmatised through physical and emotional abuse at the hands of teachers and fellow pupils.’[274]

12.1.7 The IHRC noted in July 2021 ‘At the educational level students and teachers face constant discrimination. Such discrimination is prevalent from the primary to the university level and Ahmadi children and teachers are often forced out of school or higher education through to acts of bullying, threats and explicit violence.’[275]

12.1.8 The July 2020 APPG report noted that Ahmadi schools (8 schools in Punjab, 2 colleges in Rabwah and 5 schools in Sindh), which were nationalised in 1972, had not been returned to the Ahmadi community despite the fact it had fulfilled the conditions as set out in a 1996 notice issued by the Government of Punjab, which offered owners of nationalised educational institutions the

[272] CREID, ‘Violence and Discrimination against Women…’ (page 254), November 2020
[273] USSD, ‘IRF Report 2019’ (section III), 10 June 2020
[274] APPG, ‘Suffocation of the faithful’ (page 49), July 2020
[275] IHRC, ‘Note to CPIT’ (paragraph 3.12), July 2021

chance to regain control[276]. The report noted that, unlike Ahmadis, other communities, whose schools were nationalised, had them returned[277].

12.1.9 The July 2020 APPG report cited Ahmadi community spokesperson, Saleem ud Din, who indicated that Ahmadis who move to Rabwah find there are no available places in schools to send their children[278]. The same source added 'Most parents have no option but to home educate their children. If they try to enrol their child into a school outside of Rabwah, they have to declare their current address (as Rabwah). Doing so stifles their opportunities of enrolment, as living in Rabwah is often associated with being an Ahmadi.'[279]

See also Life in Rabwah.

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12.2 Employment

12.2.1 The IHRC/AHRC 2017 fact-finding mission noted that men and women face discrimination at work on account of their faith. The report stated that many Ahmadi women choose not to reveal their faith for fear of reprisals or losing their jobs. The report gave examples of women who had lost their jobs after disclosing they were Ahmadi, been threatened with expulsion or faced verbal threats by colleagues[280].

12.2.2 The February 2019 DFAT report noted 'Ahmadis claim to face significant employment discrimination. Most Ahmadis do not declare their religion in the workplace, as those discovered face hostility and discrimination, including dismissal.'[281]

12.2.3 As noted in the report on poor Ahmadi women published by CREID, most private jobs require a person to reveal their faith, adding 'Jobs in the private sector are not offered to AMs [Ahmadis] mainly to avoid a potential backlash from other employees.'[282]

12.2.4 The IHRC noted in July 2021 'In economic and work-related terms, Ahmadis remain discriminated against at the workplace: their shops are boycotted or destroyed, promotions are denied, they are often refused employment, and face daily harassment.'[283]

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Section 13 updated: 24 August 2021

13. Verification process

13.1 Verifying incidents against Ahmadis

13.1.1 When asked if an Ahmadi leader would attempt to corroborate incidents reported to them by members of their community, the official at the AMA UK

[276] APPG, 'Suffocation of the faithful' (page 50), July 2020
[277] APPG, 'Suffocation of the faithful' (page 50), July 2020
[278] APPG, 'Suffocation of the faithful' (page 69), July 2020
[279] APPG, 'Suffocation of the faithful' (page 69), July 2020
[280] IHRC/AHRC, 'Ahmadis in Pakistan Face an Existential Threat', (page 44), April 2017
[281] DFAT, 'Country Information Report Pakistan' (paragraph 3.131), 20 February 2019
[282] CREID, 'Violence and Discrimination against Women…' (page 258), November 2020
[283] IHRC, 'Note to CPIT' (paragraph 3.9), July 2021

said in March 2015 that local leaders would always look to verify incidents though, in some cases and due to limited resources, it would be taken as verbatim. The official also pointed out that in more rural and remote areas, it would be more difficult to confirm incidents[284].

13.1.2 Speaking in March 2015, the Ahmadi member described his own situation whilst in Pakistan. He pointed out that he had received threats, but didn't go into details. He said his local president offered advice but didn't look into the incident. The Member pointed out that he had been told not to go to the police, adding that that it doesn't take much for the police to arrest people for blasphemy, for example, for citing the Koran, using the Muslim greeting 'assalaamu alaikum', or such like. The Member also said that there is no bail for offences under section 295c of the Pakistan Penal Code, not even from the high courts[285] (See Legal rights and Application of the blasphemy laws).

13.1.3 In its note to CPIT, updated July 2021, the IHRC reiterated AMA UK's position in verifying incidents:

> '… the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in the UK … is extremely careful in verifying accounts and will only verify where the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is 100% sure to ensure its credibility that is paramount. As part of the verification procedure, the local Sadr would verify the applicants accounts through a number of sources, e.g. through the officials of the subsidiary organisations (Youth, Elders or Ladies) or through other officials. However, the fact that information is not verified does not mean it is not true. The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is a religious organisation, although well organised it cannot be compared to a professional or corporate entity hence there could be inadvertent mistakes from time to time but these could be easily cleared through an effective communication strategy and coordination with the Ahmadi Community.'[286] (See Ahmadiyya community in Pakistan).

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Official – sensitive: Start of section

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[284] AMA UK, 'Note of CPIT meeting', 26 March 2015
[285] AMA UK, 'Note of CPIT meeting', 26 March 2015
[286] IHRC, 'Note to CPIT' (paragraph 4.1), July 2021

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Official – sensitive: End of section

Terms of Reference

A 'Terms of Reference' (ToR) is a broad outline of what the CPIN seeks to cover. They form the basis for the country information section. The Home Office's Country Policy and Information Team uses some standardised ToR, depending on the subject, and these are then adapted depending on the country concerned.

For this particular CPIN, the following topics were identified prior to drafting as relevant and on which research was undertaken:

- Brief background of the Ahmadi faith
- Legal rights
    - 'Anti-Ahmadi' laws

- Blasphemy laws
    - Anti-terror legislation
    - Electoral list and voting rights
- Identity documents
    - Passports and identity cards, inclusion of the term Ahmadi on documents
- Ahmadiyya community in Pakistan
    - Demography
    - Registration
    - The city of and living in Rabwah
    - Intersect marriage
    - Ahmadi dress and identifying behaviours
- Religious practices
    - Culture and activities
    - Proselytising, importance of Tabligh
- Converts to the Ahmadi faith
- Ahmadi women
- State treatment and attitudes
    - Anti-Ahmadi rhetoric
    - Representation in government
    - Freedom of expression – cyber laws, Ahmadi publications and bans
    - Application of blasphemy laws
    - Police and judiciary protection
- Societal treatment and attitudes
    - Hate speech, incitement of violence
    - Anti-Ahmadi violence
- Discrimination in employment and education
    - Education
    - Employment
- Verification of incidents
    - Verifying incidents against Ahmadis
    - The AMA UK verification procedure

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Annex A

Note of CPIT meeting with officials from the Ahmadiyya Muslim Association UK, 26 March 2015, reviewed July 2021

Information reviewed and confirmed by the International Human Rights Commission (IHRC) in July 2021

Demography

The UK Ahmadiyya Muslim Association UK (the Association) stated that it was difficult to estimate the size of the Ahmadi population in Pakistan. They said that it used to be over 800,000. However, the unofficial census figure from 2011 (to be released) records a figure of around 400,000.

Aside from Rabwah, the main population centres for Ahmadis are Sialkot, Quetta, Multan, Rawalpindi, Karachi, Lahore and Faisalabad.

There is no central register of Ahmadis in Pakistan. Each local branch maintains a list of members. According to a member of the Ahmadiyya community (the Member), currently based in the UK, some branches issue membership cards.

The Association understood that each auxiliary organisation (local branch) maintains a list of members in Pakistan. There are three in all – one looks after elderly men (40+); one for men aged 15-40; one is a women's section. How each list was maintained would be specific to the local auxiliary, though would usually contain personal bio data and financial records. The auxiliaries would fall under the national association in Pakistan.

The Member confirmed that his local branch in Rawalpindi maintains a list of members. When he joined his branch in Rawalpindi, having moved from Quetta, he completed the relevant forms confirming his change of address and the Ahmadi branch in Quetta confirmed from their records that he had previously been a member there. This is the normal procedure but there could be exceptions.

The Association maintains a central database of UK members (approximately 29,000). This is irrespective of which local branch in Pakistan the member may have come from. The Association believed that a central register (in Rabwah) is going to be implemented in Pakistan in the future.

Day-to-day life Pakistan

- CNIC cards

The Member stated that all Pakistanis should have a CNIC card. However, the Association had spoken to a person in the UK who claimed he had not been issued with one. The Member did not think this would be the case; however, he said that some people living in rural areas, who were uneducated, may not have CNIC cards.

- Does the card identify you as Ahmadi?

The Member confirmed that a CNIC does not identify a person as being Ahmadi, i.e. it is not written on the card. However, when applying for a CNIC the person has to divulge their faith and these records are held by NADRA (National Database and Registration Authority). The Association pointed out that a CNIC has the persons address on it. Therefore, a Rabwah address would naturally identify a person as

being Ahmadi. The Member believes that people in NADRA have been known to ‘leak’ information identifying Ahmadis; he gave an example of someone who knew a person was Ahmadi, and knew their address, because a person at NADRA had provided them with this information.

As with applying for a passport, a CNIC application requires the person to denounce Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Ahmadi prophet.

The Association said that a CNIC is required to open a bank account, and that the account holder must declare their religious affiliation. The Association added that, if you declare you are a Muslim, you are liable to a 2.5% tax (zakat); therefore an Ahmadi would declare themselves as such to avoid this.

A CNIC is required to access health services and to rent or buy a property, but a person does not always have to declare their religion for such purposes.

To access education, the Member stated that a person must complete an application form, which asks for your religion. Since there is not a ‘tick’ box for Ahmadi, and an Ahmadi cannot identify themselves as Muslim, the person would have to write Ahmadi on the application.

The Association mentioned that a small percentage of people tend to hire agents to come to the UK. They cannot/ do not apply for a visit visa, as they fear they are going to be refused. Therefore, they obtain a passport that declares them as Muslim.

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- How do Ahmadi children get distinguished at school?

The Member said that children identified as Ahmadi are subject to segregation, harassment, teasing, discrimination and sometimes extra punishment. The Member confirmed the Association's anecdotal hearing that Ahmadi children are not allowed to eat with other (Muslim) children in school canteens, or use the same cups/cutlery. The Member said that this also happens sometimes in restaurants, adding that some businesses display signs stating no Qadiyani (a derogatory term for Ahmadi) allowed.

- Are you treated differently in hospitals?

The Member said some hospitals treat you differently; not all hospitals ask a person to declare their religious affiliation.

- Does it differ on whether it's a government hospital or private?

The Member said that private hospitals tend to be better than government-run, but believed that was because they are more concerned about money.

- Asked about other things, e.g. going to the post office, bus station, trains, using couriers?

The Member stated that on such occasions a person doesn't tend to get asked their religious affiliation. However, some shops and restaurants display signs that Qadiyanis are not served.

- What about renting a property?

The Member said that although a person does not have to officially declare their religion when renting a property, some people don't like to rent houses to Ahmadis. The Member highlighted the example of being asked to leave a place once the landlord was made aware that he was an Ahmadi.

In a public-facing building (like a shop), word quickly gets round that the occupier is Ahmadi.

- Description of the Ahmadi ID Card.

The UK Ahmadiyya Association membership card has a picture on the left; bar code on the bottom right; membership number above the bar code; name above that; picture of the Mosque underneath; bar strip across the top. The Member said that the Pakistani Ahmadi ID card is equivalent but without the barcode.

- Do Ahmadis inter-marry? (e.g. to Shia, Sunni)

The Association said that intermarriage with other sects was uncommon. In cases where this does occur, an Ahmadi man would need permission to marry outside the

Ahmadi faith. There are very strict conditions on women marrying outside the faith and this would only happen, with permission, in extreme circumstances.

All Ahmadi marriages (even if inter-sect) must be performed by an Ahmadi cleric. If a non-Ahmadi cleric performed the marriage the parties would be ex-communicated.

Reporting incidents to the Police or Ahmadiyya community

The Association pointed out that Ahmadis are hesitant to report things to the police due to fear of recriminations. There are situations (if you are badly injured, etc), where you have to. However, even in the case of serious incidents, including deaths, they may not always be reported as police do not always record a First Information Report due to pressure placed on them by some clerics

The Association confirmed that people are more likely to report incidents to their local community/leaders but not in all cases, e.g. if the incident is considered minor. Some things happen so often they would not report it for fear of drawing attention to themselves. The Association believed that the most serious incidents are reported to the community and unless there has been a change in leadership of the branch, the President of that branch would know about such incidents, which may be corroborated by the branch's security and surveillance department. However, it must be noted that most Ahmadis consider the incidents as daily life and do not regularly report them.

In regard to reporting incidents generally, the Association likened it to having the flu: sometimes you go to the doctor, but sometimes you don't.

- Would the leader always verify/check what a person was reporting to them, or would they take it on trust?

The Association said that local leaders would always look to verify incidents though. It was also pointed out that in more rural and remote areas, it is more difficult to check things.

The Member explained his own situation in Pakistan. He pointed out that he'd received threats, but didn't go into details. He said his local president offered advice but didn't look into the incident. The Member pointed out that he had been told not to go to the police, adding that that it doesn't take much for the police to arrest people for blasphemy, for example, for citing the Koran, using 'assalaamu alaikum', and so forth. The Member also said that there is no bail for offences under 295c, not even from the high courts.

UK Ahmadiyya Association membership

- How would the UK Ahmadiyya Association know that a person is an Ahmadi?

The Association said that they wouldn't know immediately, although they can usually tell by the person's demeanour. Generally, by asking one or two questions, they would usually be able to tell if a person is Ahmadi. The head of the Ahmadiyya Community lives in the UK. He has a '£1m pricetag on his head', so the Association take their security very seriously and always get confirmation that a person is an Ahmadi.

The person is asked to fill in a Membership Verification Form, which is forwarded first to Rabwah, then to the person's local branch in Pakistan. This process usually takes 6-8 weeks.

The form contains broad details:

where from; who is the president; personal/family details; position held and activities undertaken.

In the case of asylum, the person may also write a statement describing the events that had occurred in Pakistan although the Association does not prompt this.

- Have the Association had people come to them who they know or believe not to be Ahmadi?

The Association affirmed this and explained that the HO have accepted people as being Ahmadi when the Association has not confirmed this is the case. This happened more in the past but not recently.

Irrespective of the HO accepting a person as an Ahmadi, the Association would still verify this in the process described above, if a person was applying for membership.

- When would the Association issue a membership card? Is it on confirmation from Pakistan that the person is accepted as Ahmadi?

Each individual family member is verified prior to issuing a membership card. Only upon confirmation from Pakistan is membership issued.

- When a person approaches the Association for help on asylum, does the Association check method of entry to UK?

No. The Association's interest is simply whether the person is Ahmadi.

- What kind of information/advice do you give them?

The Association stressed that it was not in the business of instructing asylum applicants. When the person first comes in, they are asked to fill in a Membership Verification Form, and if they wish to write a statement explaining events that have occurred in Pakistan.

The Association does not provide accommodation. However, where a person is in desperate need of help, the Association may offer some charity. They may also refer the person to one or two solicitors who the Association trust to work diligently.

At no stage is the Association involved in a person's asylum application per se.

The Association do not attend a person's asylum interviews, appeal hearings, etc. They have, in the past, attended hearings – around 5 hearings in 12 years – but that was more to explain the verification procedure, not for the claim itself.

The Annual Conference (Jalsa Salana) takes place at the same time each year. If a person has come to the Association in support of their asylum claim, the Association asks the person whether they obtained a visa specifically for the Conference. If yes, the Association **would not** issue a confirmation letter with regards their asylum application. A person requesting verification of specific events concerning their asylum application is asked to sign a declaration on oath confirming they did not come to the UK for the annual Ahmadi Convention. The reason is to maintain the reputation of the Association as an undertaking has been given that those who come for the Jalsa will return.

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Annex C:

Note to CPIT from the International Human Rights Committee (IHRC), 25 April 2018 reviewed and updated July 2021

Information reviewed and confirmed by the International Human Rights Commission (IHRC) in July 2021

1. **Tabligh - Possibilities for Ahmadis to profess their faith and the possibilities to express it publicly, through evangelism or otherwise**

1.1 The definition of Tabligh according to the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is 'preaching, conveying the message of Ahmadiyyat to non-Ahmadis (i.e. those who are not Ahmadis)'. This can have many connotations and take different forms which will be further elaborated below.

1.2 The first thing to point out is that the law in Pakistan (Anti-Ahmadi Ordinance and Blasphemy Laws) clearly states that Ahmadi Muslims cannot preach or propagate their faith. This is beyond doubt and dispute. This makes the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community unique in Pakistan as being the **only** religious community in Pakistan to be targeted by the state simply on grounds of faith. This legislation not only prohibits preaching and other forms of proselytizing but also in practice restricts other elements of manifesting religious belief, such as holding open discourse about religion with non-Ahmadis, even where these do not amount to proselytizing. The prohibitions include referring openly to one's place of worship as a mosque and to one's religious leader as an Imam. Ahmadis are not allowed to refer to the call to prayer as "azan", or to call themselves Muslims, or to refer to their faith as Islam. Sanctions include a fine and imprisonment and, if blasphemy is found, there is the possibility of the death penalty. If the death penalty is imposed there is a risk of lengthy incarceration. This legislation is used by non-state actors to threaten and harass Ahmadis.

1.3 Having spoken to the Ahmadi Community in Pakistan and the United Kingdom, it is clear that Ahmadis feel that their very essence has been sapped and outlawed by the fact that they are not allowed to express any aspect of their faith which has any connection with Islam or from referring to their faith as "Islam". Article 298 C forbids Ahmadis from "posing as Muslims" directly or indirectly "or from outraging the feelings of Muslims". The loose wording means abuse of the law to harass Ahmadis is rife.

1.4 The effect of this is that "Ahmadi Muslims cannot openly profess their faith publicly through evangelism or otherwise. The definition of proselytizing is being stretched for Ahmadi Muslims and is now limited to activities such (but not exclusively) as serving humanity through medical camps which may lead to discussions about Ahmadiyyat although not publicly; Ahmadis discussing Ahmadiyyat with non-

Ahmadis once they have become familiar with them although they run the risk of being reported; for women the attire generally worn by Ahmadi ladies can be a means and way of proselytizing – again this attracts the risk of being discriminated against particularly socially where they are easy targets. Performing the aforementioned activities is still not an easy task as it means there is risk to the relevant Ahmadi and can have negative repercussions." (IHRC and AHRC Fact Finding Report 2015)

1.5 Having spoken to and interviewing hundreds of members of the Ahmadiyya faith in Pakistan and asylum seekers in the United Kingdom, it has become evident that Ahmadis resort to covert means of propagating their faith in Pakistan and in most cases only do so when a relationship has been established with an individual and they feel it is safe to broach the subject. Any actions including charitable works that may show the Ahmadi faith in a positive light may be seized upon by opponents of the community as attempts to propagate the faith. Since the law forbids Ahmadis from propagating their faith Ahmadis thus resort to more subtle means of impressing others in the hope of leading by example whereby good works and behaviour may attract others towards the faith.

1.6 Whilst the Ahmadi community in Pakistan undertakes, from time to time, humanitarian and charitable works either directly or indirectly through NGOs, they also take the opportunities they present to engage in dialogue with any who may display an interest in the faith. Accordingly, medical camps where free medicines and treatment are distributed to the wider community and community services such as road cleaning and repairs etc. present gentle means of reaching out, if and when the occasion becomes propitious. Further all these things come under the ambit of Tabligh or an Ahmadi propagating his/her faith. The Ahmadiyya Muslim community explained that whilst propagation of faith was important to them this took many forms from direct to indirect Tabligh. In fact, the Ahmadiyya Muslim community mentioned that being identified as an Ahmadi in Pakistan is Tabligh itself. Further, the very essence of Tabligh is dependent on the circumstances. In some circumstances it would be direct and open, whilst in others it would be indirect or discrete.

1.7 In terms of an Ahmadis religious knowledge for undertaking Tabligh, this question was raised with the Imam of Ahmadiyya London Mosque, Mr Ataul Mujeeb Rashed who said to us that:

"it cannot be denied that one who is well versed and has educated himself with all the intellectual and philosophical arguments used by the community, such as a Minister of Religion who has been through a seven years' full-time course at a theosophical academy, would be a well-rounded and knowledgeable member who can teach the faith to others effectively. This does not mean that a less well-educated person could not discuss religious matters with his contacts. Therefore, it is plausible that an Ahmadi can engage in preaching activities with non-

Ahmadis despite limited English. Even the mere fact that he/she might offer an invitation to a non-Ahmadi to an Ahmadi Muslim community function is a form of Tabligh since he is seeking to promote his faith. Even when he offers hospitality to another this is laying the foundations for Tabligh and is indeed regarded as a form of Tabligh by our community and by those who oppose our faith community."

1.8 In short, Tabligh does not mean per se that one must proselytize openly and in public. It takes many forms and has many meanings such as one's behavior, hospitality, giving literature, doing charitable work, meeting people and engaging with them on faith to more direct means such as holding Tabligh Stalls, leafleting, engaging directly with people, and holding events. All these fall under the ambit of Tabligh. It is all about promoting the Ahmadi faith and will depend entirely on the circumstances and environment in which Ahmadis are present.

1.9 In the UK, Ahmadis undertake this in many forms, such as leafleting, coffee mornings, charitable work, inviting non-Ahmadis to Ahmadi mosques or homes of Ahmadis to events. It has to be borne in mind that this is not totally possible in Pakistan as it is illegal for Ahmadis to undertake or participate in such activities.

Those who take the risk to take part in such activities would do so discreetly and commonly through charitable work subtly once they have got to know people and then possibly by inviting them to their homes.

2. Country Guidance of MN on Tabligh

2.1 In this regard it is useful to note the UK Country Guidance from the MN Case:

One modification over time by the UT, often not understood by the SSHD's agents, is the abjuring of use of the term 'preaching', an inaccurate translation of the term 'Tabligh'. Great caution was said by the Tribunal to be necessary in employing the terms 'preaching' and/or 'proselytizing': in MJ and ZM (Ahmadis- Risk) Pakistan CG [2008] UKAIT 00033, at [50], the AIT agreed that the term 'preaching' had caused confusion and was inappropriate, 'propagation' being a better term:

Mr. Cooray argued strongly, as he had done before the Tribunal in IA and others, that the use of the Western descriptions 'preaching' and 'proselytising' was linguistically too narrow to reflect the range of activities in which an Ahmadi could engage and that 'propagation' was a better description. We agree with that…

SSHD's representative Mr Hall was recorded as conceding the point:

Mr Hall accepted that the phrase 'preaching' had caused misapprehension in the earlier evidence, not going to credibility. He agreed that the word 'preaching' should not be used and throughout his submissions referred to 'proselytising' instead…

2.2 The law clearly states that Ahmadi Muslims cannot preach or propagate their faith. This is beyond doubt and dispute. This makes the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community unique in Pakistan as being the **only** religious community in Pakistan to be targeted by the state simply on grounds of faith. This legislation not only prohibits preaching and other forms of proselytizing but also in practice restricts other elements of manifesting religious belief, such as holding open discourse about religion with non-Ahmadis, even where these do not amount to proselytizing. The prohibitions include referring openly to one's place of worship as a mosque and to one's religious leader as an Imam. Ahmadis are not allowed to refer to the call to prayer as 'azan', or to call themselves Muslims, or to refer to their faith as Islam. Sanctions include a fine and imprisonment and, if blasphemy is found, there is the possibility of the death penalty. If the death penalty is imposed there is a risk of lengthy incarceration. This legislation is used by non-state actors to threaten and harass Ahmadis.

3. Converts

3.1 The situation for converts is extremely more difficult and dangerous. If the conversion is declared in public then such a person has to face severe consequences and he/she would be legally declared non-Muslim and liable to be killed under the Blasphemy laws.

3.2 If the case is not declared and such conversion remains secret then such a person may escape legal punishment but still faces social excommunication, mental torture and prejudicial and discriminatory treatment.

3.3 The Ahmadiyya Community in Pakistan confirmed to the IHRC that they do get converts but the exact figures were not confirmed. This was corroborated by speaking to some converts in Pakistan. It is fair to say that they do not advertise their conversion to the Ahmadi faith for a host of reasons mentioned above.

3.4 Those who have converted face social boycotts in their society, marital problems with pressure from the side of the family on the partner who has not converted to the Ahmadi faith. This issue is further compounded if there are children.

3.5 It is also common for converts to not reveal to their family or friends that they have converted to the Ahmadi faith.

3.6 In one case in the UK, a lady who claimed asylum successfully after 10 years in the UK explained that her first husband left Ahmadiyyat due to pressure from his family. He told this lady to also leave so that they could remain married. When she did not, clerics, particularly from Khatme Nabuwwat started to cause problems for her which eventually led her to leave Pakistan.

4. Observations

4.1 From the information we have and according to reports we receive from other organisations and individuals, particularly those claiming asylum, the guidelines set out in MN are not being followed and cases are being pushed down the Tabligh (preaching route). All too often there is a general pattern of refusing cases due to adverse credibility when the circumstances are not fully appreciated, the situation of Ahmadis in Pakistan, MN not being followed and not fully considering the evidence of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Association UK. From the information we have and the history of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in the UK, this Community is extremely careful in verifying accounts and will only verify where the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is 100% sure to ensure its credibility that is paramount. As part of the verification procedure, the local Sadr would verify the applicants' accounts through a number of sources, e.g. through the officials of the subsidiary organisations (Youth, Elders or Ladies) or through other officials. However, the fact that information is not verified does not mean it is not true. The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is a religious organisation, although well organised it cannot be compared to a professional or corporate entity hence there could be inadvertent mistakes from time to time but these could be easily cleared through an effective communication strategy and coordination with the Ahmadi Community.

4.2 Unfortunately, the persecution of Ahmadis is not limited to Pakistan and the trend is spreading around the world, particularly in Muslim countries and even in some Western countries. There has been a major escalation in anti-Ahmadi activity recently driven by the use of cyber laws. This attempt to extend Pakistan's persecution of Ahmadis to other jurisdictions is a dangerous escalation. The Pakistani government must end its policing of Ahmadis outside the country, and focus on providing an enabling environment for free speech, expression, and freedom of religion inside Pakistan. Members of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community are already a major target for blasphemy prosecutions, and are subjected to specific anti-Ahmadi laws across Pakistan. These include the use of anti-terror laws and cyber laws against them. Policing Ahmadis digitally on what they can or cannot preach, no matter where they are, is a violation of Pakistan's legal obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights to which the country is a state party.

IHRC
25 April 2018, reviewed and updated with paragraph 4.2 in July 2021

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Annex D:

Note to CPIT from the International Human Rights Committee (IHRC), 8 June 2018, reviewed July 2021

Information reviewed and confirmed by the International Human Rights Commission (IHRC) in July 2021

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2. With regards to Ahmadi numbers in Pakistan, the IHRC was told by the AMC in Pakistan that numbers were around the 400,000 mark. There seems to be a discrepancy in numbers but this is also due to the fact that no all Ahmadis register on the official register as they are officially regarded as non-Muslims when they identify as Muslims. It also compromises the security of the Ahmadis identified as such on a separate electoral list.

3. The IHRC notes that Article 298C is wide in scope and applicability and has far reaching consequences as seen below:

Art 298C. Person of Quadiani group etc., calling himself a Muslim or preaching or propagating his faith.

Any person of the Quadiani group or the Lahori group (who call themselves 'Ahmadis' or by any other name), who, directly or indirectly, poses himself as Muslim, or calls, or refers to, his faith as Islam, or preaches or propagates his faith, or invites others to accept his faith, by words, either spoken or written, or by visible representations, or in any manner whatsoever outrages the religious feelings of Muslims, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to three years and shall also be liable to fine."

4. With regards to the US Department of State Report 2016 (USSD IRF 2016), the AMC in Pakistan informed the IHRC that it is important to note that use of name Muhammad or Islam could be in direct violation of the Pakistan Penal Code.

5. The USCIRF 2013 report noted that individuals who refused to sign the declaration when applying for a passport still received one. The IHRC has been informed by the AMC in Pakistan that this is not the case. The IHRC noted that an Ahmadi cannot legally obtain a passport without signing the declaration and, if they sign it, they are effectively declaring themselves Muslim, which is in breach of the PPC. [For an update on passports, see Annex E]

6. With regards to Rabwah, the AMC Pakistan stated that Rabwah is no safer than any other place in Pakistan and potentially a risky place to live, if one goes by the expressed wishes and intentions of anti-Ahmadi sentiment in Rabwah from mainstream Muslims. It should also be highlighted that anti-Ahmadi laws are equally applicable in Rabwah. As a result of government policy, for years a large number of Ahmadis from Rabwah faced prosecution in courts. These included the high echelon of Ahmadi leadership. Twice, on orders of the political leadership, the entire Ahmadi population of Rabwah was booked in fabricated criminal cases.

7. With regards to Tabligh it is noted that However, it should be noted that the law disallows Tabligh even for self-defence. The vernacular press repeatedly accuses Ahmadis of being ‘the worst enemies of Islam and Pakistan”. If Ahmadis say that it is not true, and explain their position, they are accused of preaching or propagating. This is leading to a growing resentment of Ahmadis and anti-Ahmadi sentiments taking root in the minds of the younger generation as they do not know any other narrative.

8. The IHRC notes that there is tangible evidence that the State is directly responsible in a number of cases in the persecution of Ahmadis. For example, the higher judiciary is supposed to be the last resort for a persecuted individual to escape societal or state tyranny; here, the judiciary itself, at times promotes tyranny. In a recent case where three innocent Ahmadis were sentenced to death over fabricated charge of ‘blasphemy’, the charge was not applied by the administration nor the police; it was applied on the orders of a High Court judge.

9. The IHRC/AHRC fact-finding report noted that women interviewed during the mission described being fearful for their safety, and that of their family and children, which often resulted in social alienation, forcing women to stay at home to avoid ridicule and abuse from the community. The report added:

‘The segregation that women encounter once people know they are Ahmadi is like a form of religious apartheid which impedes their ability to move independently in society, at work and during routine activities like shopping or going to the market. Ahmadi women face overt discrimination when shopping. Some shops display signs and banners that state we do not deal with Qadiyanis. Shopkeepers ban them from entering shops to buy goods or refuse to serve them. HA and her friends went shopping, and at the payment counter, after picking out some clothing, she was asked to disclose her faith because of her dress. The shopkeeper refused to take their payment. Once they left, 3 men on motorbikes attacked them, stole their jewellery at gunpoint and said: “because you’re Ahmadi we are allowed to shoot you”. According to DB, one shopkeeper told her, “You are Ahmadi, we will not give you anything, don’t come in my shop, get out of my shop”. Many women said local shopkeepers do not serve them, which means that have to travel between twenty minutes and up to two hours away from where they lived to acquire basic groceries and household items.’ This systemic discrimination and harassment of women and children will have psychological damage long term and many Ahmadis suffer from clinical depression.

10. Additional factors to be noted are:

a. Restrictions on construction, repairs and upgrading of Ahmadiyya mosques, and the consequential difficulties in worship and religious assemblies.

b. Freedom enjoyed by the mullah in fomenting hate against Ahmadis, through rallies, conferences, publications, etc.

c. Banning of Ahmadiyya magazines for women, children, elders, youth etc.

d. No restrictions on the vernacular media in promotion of hate against Ahmadis.

e. A recent trend has seen main stream politicians now try to encourage the religious parties in promoting hate against Ahmadis, in view of the forthcoming elections (e.g., Captain Safdar's recent rhetoric against Ahmadis).

The IHRC notes that the above attitude and permissive anti-Ahmadi hateful practices of the state have developed a potentially very dangerous situation for Ahmadis in Pakistan.

11. With regards to the Annual Convention in the UK (Jalsa Salana) the AMC UK confirmed to the IHRC that the Annual Conference takes place at the same time each year. If a person has come to the Association in support of their asylum claim, the Association asks the person whether they obtained a visa specifically for the Conference. If yes, the Association would not issue a confirmation letter with regards their asylum application. A person requesting verification of specific events concerning their asylum application is asked to sign a declaration on oath confirming they did not come to the UK for the annual Ahmadi Convention. The reason is to maintain the reputation of the Association as an undertaking has been given that those who come for the Jalsa will return.

12. With regards to Ahmadis departing from Pakistan, the IHRC notes that from its recent Fact Finding Missions and interviews with the AMC Pakistan, the AMC Pakistan disputes this and cites numerous instances when Ahmadi travellers faced great harassment and difficulties at Pakistan airports. Lahore airport is particularly notorious in this respect.

IHRC

8 June 2018, reviewed by IHRC in July 2021

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Annex E

Briefing memo from IHRC on passport issues for Pakistani Ahmadis, 19 July 2021

BRIEFING MEMO

Passport Issues with Pakistani Ahmadis

The IHRC through its partners in Pakistan, particularly the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community Pakistan sets out below the position of obtaining a passport for Ahmadi Muslims. This issue has a longish history and can be split into four major factors which are:

Entry of religion column in the passport. Since the independence of Pakistan it has passed through four stages:

(1) No entry;
(2) Entry;
(3) No entry; and
(4) again now Entry.

Ahmadis’ religious status according to the laws of Pakistan have been changed over time. Prior to 1974, as per the Constitution of Pakistan Ahmadis were Muslims. Thereafter in 1974 they were declared Non-Muslims through a constitutional amendment. This gross interference with their religious identity violated their Freedom of Religion and is not acceptable to them.

Pakistan passport itself has undergone a change. It was manual and hand-written for decades. In 2005 it was made Machine Readable (MRP). This had its own effect on this issue. Passports have a validity of five to ten years. Over this period, government policies would change, but these changes would generally not be implemented in passports issued earlier, thus giving rise to anomalies.

The governance in Pakistan, frankly, cannot be rated as among the best in the world. As such, passport offices, all over the country, could approach Ahmadi passport applicants in different ways from normal to very abnormal.

In view of the above a certain amount of confusion and some contradictions on this issue should be expected. In fact, it would be surprising if there were no contradictions – explained below.

Past History

There was no religion column in the Pakistan passport until 1974 when Amendment No. II was made to the Constitution regarding Ahmadis' religious status. This led to the government decision, in late 1970's, to add a religion column in its passports. All applicants were required to enter their religion on the application form. Ahmadis believed that their religion was Islam but the rules required that all those claiming to be Muslim should sign the following affidavit:

Declaration required of a Muslim for a Passport:

’I hereby solemnly declare that:

i. I am Muslim and believe in the absolute and unqualified finality of the prophethood of Muhammad (peace be upon him) as the last of the prophets.
ii. I do not recognize any person who claims to be a prophet in any sense of the word or of any description whatsoever after Muhammad (peace be upon him) or recognize such a claimant as prophet or a religious reformer as a Muslim.
iii. I consider Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Qadiani to be an imposter nabi and also consider his followers whether belonging to the Lahori or Quadiani group to be non-Muslims.’

Signature...........

(From an Application Form for obtaining a passport, issued by the Government of Pakistan, Ministry of Interior, Directorate General Immigration and Passports)

Ahmadis felt very upset and hurt over this. Also, they believed that 'Ahmadi' was not a religion; it was only a denomination. But now they had two options:

(1) Sign the declaration; or
(2) Not have a passport.

Some of them, at that time, withdrew their application. With the passage of time, however, Ahmadis had to submit to ground realities, and rather than signing the imposed Affidavit, they yielded to the given religion of 'Ahmadi' to qualify initially for citizen rights including a national identity card, a passport etc. This is the experience of Ahmadis in many fields.

This situation, however, caused anomalies, exceptions, and of course 'confusion'. For example, in 1984 one Captain SA Khalid PN, a well-known Ahmadi applied for a passport. In the application form he declared that he was an Ahmadi. However when he received his passport, he was mentioned in there as Muslim.

At this he was delighted, and feeling that he had truthfully told the authorities in the form that he was an Ahmadi, now if they still enter him as Muslim, it was their 'error', not his so he used the passport as it was. A deeper inquiry would have rated the entry as 'confusing but this was attributable to the Passport Office. Additionally, it was learnt in the past that in some embassies abroad, some 'Muslims' refused to sign the absurd Affidavit concerning religion, and demanded that a passport be still issued to them. The authorities there in a foreign country issued the passport. The daily Dawn of 01 June 2016 published an op-ed that described a somewhat similar case inside the country.

Enter the Machine Readable Passport (MRP) in 2005. Initially as per international standard, there was no religion column in it. Having spent a lot of money on this project, the Passport Office issued tens of thousands of MRPs and the government initially resisted the religious clerics pressure to include a religion column in it. However, the authorities eventually yielded to clerics and started mentioning the holder's religion on page 3. Passports are issued for 5 to 10 years so it is most likely that many such passports issued in 2005/2006 had no religion column till these expired in 2015/16. This should explain the 'confusion' in some statements.

The above shows that at some stage in Pakistan there were three types of passports old manuals which contained the religion column, MRPs without the religion column and MRPs with religion column (not mentioning the earlier manual type with no religion column). One who gets confused cannot be blamed for that. The daily Dawn of 05 Jan 2005, published an op-ed on this issue.

Present Procedure

First we should mention briefly the function of NADRA and the Directorate of Passports, and their interaction. NADRA is primarily responsible for the issue of national identity cards (CNIC). It has all the data of all citizens. From 2005 onward the Passport Offices obtain their date (including Religion) from NADRA electronically and enter it in the MRPs.

Basic procedure for obtaining a passport is the same for all Pakistanis, regardless of their religion. The applicant has to produce his identity card (CNIC) issued by NADRA. The Data Entry Operator at the Passport Office enters electronically all information from his CNIC on to his form. He takes out a print copy. The applicant, if non-Muslim (even Ahmadis), signs it as a token of veracity of information, while a Muslim signs in addition at the medieval Affidavit which is the same as quoted earlier (For an example of a signed declaration see [The day I declared my best friend kafir just so I could get a passport - DAWN.COM]). The passport when ready is handed over to the applicant; opening page and the religion column page:


PAKISTAN

[redacted]

Government of Pakistan

The President

Islamic Republic of Pakistan

Director General

Immigration and Passports

[redacted]

It is relevant to mention here that Ahmadis in Pakistan face difficulties in numerous government offices including many passport offices. Some Passport Officers unjustifiably harass Ahmadi applicants. They are asked to prove that they are Ahmadis. They are at times told to produce their birth certificates, community subscription receipts or produce an endorsement of a community official. Many Ahmadis born before 1974 have birth certificates wherein their religion is mentioned as Islam. This invites undeserved criticism from the passport clerks. This is why Ahmadi may face numerous difficulties at the passport office with regard to Religion entry.

In relation to the USCIRF 2013 report and explanations given by IHRC it appears that these statements were made with specific assumptions and presumptions not clearly mentioned in the statement.

Here we quote only one statement as sample – 'The USCIRF 2013 Report' noted that: "individuals who refused to sign the declaration when applying for a passport still received one".

• This Report does not clearly state that the individuals were Ahmadis or Non-Ahmadi Muslims. These cases came up in Pakistan or in foreign embassies?

• Reportedly there were 'Muslims' abroad who received passports but were there any Ahmadis too?

• This Report came out in 2013 but what was happening in 2019, 2020?

Very briefly, all this apparent confusion has been caused by a senseless and irrational decision that:

1. Religion column should be there in Pakistan passport; and

2. Ahmadis, regardless of their faith in Islam, shall be treated as Non-Muslims.

These basic aberrations are the main causes of this problem, and could give rise to further complications and confusion in future as well. In a way, the authorities have been responding to the problems as they came up in the past. They provided a solution or a way-out to Ahmadis to obtain a passport, whether they liked the procedure or not.

At present the governing rules and procedures are given in the following websites: http://www.dgip.gov.pk/files/Passport.aspx

https://onlinemrp.nadra.gov.pk/e-passport

Questions answered

Q1. Confirm the exact position on passports. Answer. It is as given above. Ahmadis are issued passport. If they give their religion as 'Ahmadi', they are issued their passport with religion mentioned as 'Ahmadiyya'.

Q2. Confirm if NADRA issues passport with Ahmadi printed as the religion. Answer: Not NADRA, but Directorate of Immigration and Passports issues passports. The religion 'Ahmadiyya' is mentioned for the applicant on the third page.

Q3. Religion NOT recorded on passports? Answer: We are not in a position to confirm or deny the above; only the Directorate of Passports can do that. As for exceptional circumstances, the possibilities have been mentioned above.

IHRC
19 July 2021

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Annex F

Note to CPIT from IHRC, July 2021

1. INFRINGEMENT OF RIGHT TO PRIVACY THROUGH CYBER LAWS

1.1 On 24 December 2020, the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (the "PTA") emailed two US citizens who are members of the US-based Ahmadiyya Muslim Community with a legal notice to remove the U.S. based website – www.trueislam.com – for containing "blasphemous" content in violation of Pakistan's Blasphemy Law and Cyber Laws. Under the law, there can be a 500 million rupee fine ($3.1M USD) for non-compliance, along with potential prosecution which includes a 10-year prison sentence without bail.

1.2 On 25 December 2020, the PTA issued takedown notices to Google and Wikipedia to remove content associated with the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, claiming that it amounted to disseminating sacrilegious content through these platforms. The Pakistan Government is:

a) Requiring Wikipedia to remove articles portraying the worldwide Caliph of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, His Holiness Mirza Masroor Ahmad, as a Muslim;

b) Requiring Google to remove a Google play app published by the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, which provides Arabic and English translations of the Qur'an; and

c) Requiring Google to change their algorithm for the search queries "Khalifa of Islam" and "Caliph of Islam". The PTA has threatened penalties and prosecution for non-compliance and action is also being taken in other Western countries.

1.3 In the past few weeks, the PTA has issued takedown notices to the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in Australia, Canada and the UK.

1.4 The original intent behind the Cyber Laws was to curb online harassment and terrorist content in the wake of the 2014 terrorist attack on the Army Public School in Peshawar. However, these Cyber Laws are being misused to target minorities. More disturbingly these Cyber Laws target foreigners outside of Pakistan provided their actions are directed at Pakistan. Effectively, this is applying Pakistani law globally including to acts undertaken outside of Pakistan by people who are not citizens of Pakistan.

1.5 This attempt to extend Pakistan's persecution of Ahmadis to other jurisdictions is a dangerous escalation. The Pakistani government must end its policing of Ahmadis outside the country, and focus on providing an enabling environment for free speech, expression, and freedom of religion inside Pakistan. Members of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community are already a major target for blasphemy prosecutions, and are subjected to specific anti-Ahmadi laws across Pakistan. These include the use of anti-terror laws and cyber laws against them.

1.6 Policing Ahmadis digitally on what they can or cannot preach, no matter where they are, is a violation of Pakistan's legal obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights to which the country is a state party.

2. ANTI-TERRORISM ACT

2.1 There is a very broad definition of terrorism laid down in the Anti-Terrorism Act; by the Act's supremacy over other laws, including the Juvenile Justice System Ordinance, 2000, which enables the courts to try juveniles; by the power of the authorities to detain a person for up to one year; and by the admissibility of confessions made in police custody as evidence in court, provided for in section 21-H of the Act. It is also concerned by the extensive jurisdiction of antiterrorism courts and the huge backlog of cases, as well as the absence of procedural safeguards in court proceedings (arts. 2, 6, 7, 14 and 15).

2.2 This legislation was supposed to stop sectarian hatred against minorities but is increasingly used by the State to ban Ahmadi literature and by extremist clerics to target Ahmadis. This has profound implications and is more far

reaching than the Blasphemy Laws as any Ahmadi can now be arrested without notice and without any recourse to bail. The penalty is a mandatory five-year sentence of imprisonment. It is extremely concerning that Ahmadis are being profiled under this legislation. The National Plan of Action is the origin of the raid in the Rabwah, Chakwal attack and the arrest of Abdul Shakoor (elderly bookshop owner). Pakistan is using anti-terrorism laws as a pretext for denying Ahmadis their fundamental human right to religious freedom. The arrest and sentencing of Abdul Shakoor is yet another example of Pakistan's systematic and egregious violations of freedom of religion or belief.

3. SUMMARY

3.1 The promulgation of Ordinance XX in 1984 has resulted in members of the Ahmadiyya community in Pakistan becoming more vulnerable to various forms of attack and harassment. The desecration of Ahmadi places of worship and attacks on private houses of Ahmadis is a recurrent phenomenon. The right to assembly of Ahmadis has frequently been curtailed; the annual meeting of the Ahmadiyya community has been banned since 1984. Ahmadi newspapers and magazines are frequently banned if articles in them are considered to offend the religious feelings of orthodox Muslims. The law enforcement authorities do not provide adequate protection or redress to Ahmadis who have been subjected to assault, attack, or provocation by non-Ahmadis.

3.2 Whether Ahmadis are recognised as Muslims or not, we are concerned that under the increasingly stringent legislation in Pakistan, members of the Ahmadiyya Community can be imprisoned and even sentenced to death solely for the exercise of their right to freedom of religion including the right to express their religion, either individually or in community with others. The legislation contained in Ordinance XX provides for imprisonment on grounds of religious belief.

3.3 We are also concerned that the freedom of expression and the freedom of association of members of the Ahmadiyya community have not been effectively safeguarded in Pakistan. In situations of religious conflict, the authorities have a particular responsibility to safeguard the fundamental rights of the minority, including the right to liberty and the safety of the person. We are concerned that the authorities in Pakistan have not always taken effective steps to protect these rights and, when these rights come under attack, to provide for adequate redress.

3.4 In the past year alone, at least 24 criminal cases were registered against members of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in Pakistan on religious grounds, including a jeweller who was charged for having sacrificed a cow and then distributing the meat. At least six members were killed in separate targeted attacks, including an elderly man, who was shot dead inside a courtroom.

3.5 The escalation in the use of Cyber Laws and anti-terror laws against Ahmadis is a major development that transcends the boundaries of Pakistan and targets overseas nationals.

3.6 Blasphemy legislation is implemented at political, economic, social, and educational level affecting Ahmadis from all sectors of society and of all ages. This repressive legislation and state-endorsed compliance has had traumatic consequences for all Ahmadis as they continue to live in fear of daily persecution by the state, the judiciary, the police, religious vigilantes, media, and the general public, thus effectively denying them their most basic fundamental entitlements of religious freedom and human rights.

3.7 Law enforcement agencies are frequently unsympathetic and unwilling and often unable to provide protection to Ahmadis due to pressure from orthodox clerics and mob violence. The Judiciary is intimidated and placed under pressure by clerics and lawyers who share fundamentalist ideologies.

3.8 At the political level Ahmadis continue to face political discrimination. This political persecution is institutionalised throughout all bureaucratic procedures, including identity cards and passport applications, access to public services, job applications and entry for school examinations which all require a declaration of religious belief.

3.9 In economic and work-related terms, Ahmadis remain discriminated against at the workplace: their shops are boycotted or destroyed, promotions are denied, they are often refused employment, and face daily harassment. Ahmadis are also frequently denied the right to visit local shops and banners targeting Ahmadis are often posted at the entrance of markets.

3.10 At the social level the Report supplies multiple examples of how Ahmadis are forbidden to practice their religion, including everyday practices, and how religious clerics and organisations target Ahmadis through hate campaigns and deadly attacks. The police often remain passive or condone violence in the face of targeted attacks and law enforcement agencies and the judiciary are too implicated or too afraid to effectively deal with these violations.

3.11 Media, journalists or lawyers supporting the Community are also frequently the objects of violent pursuits and Ahmadis who have been denied asylum in other countries often return to an insecure and fearful existence.

3.12 At the educational level students and teachers face constant discrimination. Such discrimination is prevalent from the primary to the university level and Ahmadi children and teachers are often forced out of school or higher education through to acts of bullying, threats and explicit violence. The psychological impact on Ahmadis living within this climate of fear, intimidation and systematic persecution needs to also be considered, particularly the impact on the young, elderly and vulnerable.

3.13 The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in Pakistan is facing potential systematic genocide. The long- standing, targeted and regressive laws, coupled with pandering to demands of religious extremists is a path that leads ultimately towards genocide. The prevailing situation has gathered pace and momentum

and the hostility in everyday life is becoming so intense that an increasing number of Ahmadi Muslims have sought asylum abroad.

3.14 The environment of hate and extremism has also impacted other religious communities, with the persecution of Shias continuing to spiral, and Christians also being widely persecuted. We urge the international community to intervene to stop the current escalation of the persecution of Ahmadis particularly in Pakistan.

3.15 Throughout the world, the Community has suffered numerous acts of harassment, discrimination, intimidation and violence committed by State agencies or non-State actors or a combination of both. Such acts inter alia include the dissemination of hate propaganda through public media; attempts to alienate Ahmadi children from their families, for instance in the context of school education; administrative stipulations employed to prevent people from defining their religious identities freely and openly; threats of draconian blasphemy laws, partially explicitly targeting the Community; systematic discrimination in all sectors of society, including education, the labour market and access to health care; destruction of houses of worship and vandalism of cemeteries; targeted killings in a climate of impunity; denial of asylum on religious grounds. Violation of freedom of religion or belief of Ahmadis typically goes hand in hand with other human rights abuses.

3.16 Global persecution against Ahmadis, seeding from Pakistan into other countries, although beginning many years ago is now intensifying. Ahmadis in countries as far as Thailand, Malaysia, Algeria, and Bangladesh are facing similar persecution from the State and non-state actors with no signs of such treatment abating. If left unmanaged, the persecution of Ahmadis will continue to spread until it is too late to contain.

3.17 The absence of the necessary political will (largely due to fear of reprisal from but at times also due to sympathies with orthodox clerics) prevents any progress in improving the Human Rights violations against Ahmadis through law reforms or provision of the necessary backing and resources.

3.18 Under international human rights law, the State is obliged to respect everyone’s freedom of religion or belief and provide protection against any infringements from third parties. State cannot impose religious views on its citizen, and must offer equal protection of the law to all within its jurisdiction,

3.19 We hope action will be taken by the international community to safeguard and protect the human rights of Ahmadis so that they can live with dignity as equal citizens of their respective country.

IHRC

July 2021

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Annex G

Email to CPIT from British High Commission (BHC), 24 April 2021

From: [redacted]
Sent: 24 April 2021 19:24
To: [redacted]
Subject: RE: Update of Ahmadi documentation

The two queries are addressed below:

If Ahmadis refuse to sign the CNIC declaration to say they're non-Muslim, are they denied a CNIC?

Not completing the declaration designed to ensure 'the finality of the prophet' is considered an incomplete application for CNIC and the processing of the CNIC is not initiated in this case. Therefore, unequivocal completion of this declaration is a must for all CNIC and passport applications.

Do you know if these changes are strictly enforced, i.e. the restriction to change religion from Islam to another?

Change of religion from non-Muslim to Muslim is allowed without any documentation. Change of religion of from Muslim to Non-Muslim (which includes Ahmadis because Ahmadis were declared non-Muslims in the Constitutional Amendment of 1974) was banned due to a court order from Islamabad High Court (Justice Shaukat Aziz Siddiqui https://tribune.com.pk/story/1642982/nadra-barred-changing-religion-muslims-cnics). Since that court order was specifically issued to discourage conversion of Muslims to Ahmadiyya Community, such a change of religious status is no more possible without a court order. This would mean an affidavit by the applicant (litigant) seeking permission of the court to allow the change of religion. The court order in favour of the litigant would allow NADRA to change the status of religion on the CNIC/Passport. Disallowance would result in an appeal to District Court and then to High Court. Since this court proceeding would not have an 'opposing party', it is considered to be straight forward. However, the issue of the lack data protection in an open court hearing on the issue of apostasy would discourage any such litigation. Apostasy is not a crime under the Pakistan Criminal Code, however, it is a serious issue under Sharia law with death sentence recommendations for anyone leaving Islam as religion. 'Death to apostate' is a mantra that is more or less common to all sects of Islam. Therefore, the legal window that is considered to be available is not much in practical terms.

Though the court decision of the High Court that resulted in this policy shift of NADRA was hugely controversial and the High Court Judge who issued the order was later removed from office (Oct 2018) due to misconduct charges https://www.dawn.com/news/1438545 his order on the CNIC issue was not nullified due to the strong political pressure on the government from radical elements of the society.

British High Commission | Diplomatic Enclave | PO Box 1122 | Ramna 5 | Islamabad

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Updated country information and assessment

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